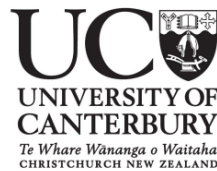


“Yeah nah, she’ll be right”

An Attitudinal Study of ‘yeah nah’ in New Zealand English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Linguistics by Laura Manhire



University of Canterbury
2021

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Abstract

This thesis is a study into ‘yeah nah’ in a New Zealand English context and how linguistic items become part of a culture and identity. ‘Yeah nah’ appears frequently within New Zealand media and is pegged as ‘distinctly kiwi’ and sometimes with a variety of meanings. Many products are also available for purchase featuring ‘yeah nah’, including t-shirts, mugs, phone cases, and vape juice. Despite this, there is a lack of research into this discourse marker. This study utilises a questionnaire to answer the following questions:

1. Who uses ‘yeah nah’?
2. What kind of stereotypes surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’?
3. What context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, and therefore, what does it mean?

Participants of the questionnaire were asked to answer demographic questions about themselves, then were asked to imagine a typical user of ‘yeah nah’ and answer the same demographic questions accordingly. Finally, participants were asked to give the context(s) and meaning(s) of ‘yeah nah’. A quantitative approach was used for the first two parts of the survey, followed by a qualitative analysis using a phenomenology method for the last part of the survey.

According to the 122 responses, the person who is most likely to use ‘yeah nah’ is strictly male, aged 26-35 and Pākehā. Participants who answered they used the term themselves however revealed no gender difference. Participants believed it to strictly belong to New Zealand English (NZE) and not any other variety of English. By analysing ‘yeah nah’ in the Quake Studies, MAONZE and ONZE spoken corpora, however, Māori men were more likely to actually use the term in reality.

This strong distinction for participants opens the central debate of the thesis into how gender and national identity are intertwined and whether ‘yeah nah’ is enregistered. According to Agha (2007, p.81), enregisterment refers to the processes and practices where performable signs become recognised and regrouped as belonging to distinct, valorised semiotic registers by a group of people. I argue that ‘yeah nah’ is enregistered and signals that it belongs to the ‘kiwi’ culture and local New Zealander identity. This identity has a strong male stereotype, especially as the word ‘kiwi’ has male connotations and there’s a lack of a salient female ‘kiwi’ stereotype. ‘Yeah nah’ is split into several functions to capture its context according to participants, and key to this is its ‘kiwi’-centric and thus male-centric stereotypes. These functions were also applied to examples from the three corpora, showing that in context, ‘yeah nah’ provides cohesion and topic-focusing, demonstrating contemplation, and to show various levels of agreement.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was completed with a huge team of support behind me. This would never have been finished without their help and their invaluable ability to listen to my many different ideas.

My supervisors Lynn and Jen gently guided me and pointed me into helpful directions and solutions throughout the whole process. Lynn's help was especially needed in finding my research topic and in pointing me in the right direction for finding a suitable qualitative method. Jen's support in finding appropriate literature was invaluable, as was the aid in trying to uncover my results in the quantitative section.

I'd also like to thank the NZILBB group for the Socio (brainstorming) meetings and for their constructive feedback and positive remarks. The opportunity to bounce ideas off of them was useful in not only pathways to pursue, but also in organising my own thoughts and how I'd present my ideas in this thesis.

A big shout-out to Frenchsoc, the French club at UC, for which their weekly coffee meetings were a delightful break from study. I loved getting to know everybody with my involvement in the group. Their positive, can-do attitude taught me a lot about how to approach my studies and I enjoyed their academic discussions. A big thank you to Professors Eric Mouhica and Antonio Viselli. Their interest and ongoing support in my studies was immensely appreciated.

My friends were unbelievably supportive, giving encouragement and providing breaks for when things were a bit difficult throughout this whole year. I have always been able to count on my girlfriends from high school (you know who you are) and I've greatly appreciated their interest in my studies and ability to lend an ear whenever I needed it. I couldn't have done this without Gia Hurring either, my fellow MLing buddy. A heartfelt thanks to her for the incredible feedback and amazing capability to see the bigger picture.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family: Mutti, Vati, Cameron and Lucy, and Arnie and Ungle. Although our family is small, their cheering from the sidelines and participation in various Linguistics experiments throughout the years is greatly appreciated. This thesis would have been completed a lot later if it wasn't for their sense of humour, distractions and support in every facet of my life.

To the unnamed people in this section who helped in other ways along this process, my sincerest apologies for not listing you here. Understand that I really appreciate all of the help I received during this year too.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The salient discourse marker ‘yeah nah’ has gained much media attention in New Zealand with various media personalities denoting it as belonging to ‘kiwi slang’ and the New Zealander identity. For example, in the YouTube video from KiwiCulture (2019)¹, the narrator uses the following example to illustrate how ‘yeah nah’ is one of many things you “will definitely hear in Kiwi English”:

-How was your holiday?

-It was so amazing. I had the best time.

-Oh cool.

-Yeah nah, we went swimming and hiking in the afternoon, and all the food was fantastic. It was so relaxing.

The narrator goes on to say that depending on the situation, it can mean yes, no, maybe or nothing. The reason why ‘yeah nah’ is so interesting is that a simple ‘yeah’ or ‘no’ doesn’t seem to suffice in these situations, so a combination can be used in NZE. This combination in turn creates so many different nuanced meanings in different contexts. Due to this complexity and the ‘kiwi’ association, is ‘yeah nah’ in the process of enregisterment in New Zealand? In other words, is it evaluated as a core part of the New Zealand culture and identity? The study of ‘yeah nah’ provides the opportunity to further our comprehension of how culture-specific discourse markers become, or don’t become, enregistered.

Further, despite the popular recognition of the term in New Zealand among the general population, there is still a lack of academic research that surrounds the marker and its usage, leaving a number of questions unanswered. Some of these questions are as follows:

1. Who uses ‘yeah nah’?
2. What kind of stereotypes surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’?
3. What context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, and therefore, what does it mean?

This study hopes to answer the above questions using first and foremost questionnaire methods, followed by an exploration of the uses of ‘yeah nah’ in three spoken corpora of varieties of NZ English. This will also result in a better understanding of metalinguistic commentary of the discourse marker as well as some everyday usage.

Firstly, however, it is important to evaluate literature that can help inform the answers to these questions. Chapter 2 will focus on popular culture uses of ‘yeah nah’, the history of the

¹ <https://youtu.be/cEJvBfJBaDI?t=395>

term, and background to some ‘yeah no’ studies. Chapter 3 outlines the formation of the questionnaire in order to answer the three research questions. Chapter 4 will entail the quantitative analysis of the survey results, who is most likely to use the discourse marker, what stereotypes surround somebody who uses it and how enregisterment applies to ‘yeah nah’. Chapter 5 will talk about the qualitative analysis of the survey results and the context and meaning of ‘yeah nah’. Following this, Chapter 6 entails the corpora analysis of ‘yeah nah’ and will use the functions of ‘yeah nah’ according to the meanings from Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 7 will conclude the study and discuss the wider implications of the study’s findings.

CHAPTER 2

Background of ‘yeah nah’

2.1 Introduction

In order to answer the research questions, it is important to first understand why ‘yeah nah’ has gained recent attention and its significance in popular culture in a New Zealand context. Next, the history of ‘yeah nah’ will be discussed in order to illustrate its salience to New Zealanders in particular. Then ‘yeah no’ studies will be discussed to understand ‘yeah nah’ as its own salient discourse marker.

2.2 Popular culture uses of ‘yeah nah’

Firstly, ‘yeah nah’ will be referred to as a discourse marker throughout this thesis. This is important in understanding its complexity and various usages. Fairbanks (2016) claims that there is often a struggle in literature to define the criteria of discourse markers (p.13). This is often complicated by the fact that different researchers use a variety of names for discourse markers, often meaning the same things. Such examples include discourse particles (Bayer and Struckmeier, 2016) and also pragmatic markers (Aijmer, 2013). As Schourup (2011, p.2110) states, the research on discourse markers often starts with the assumption that these markers or expressions signal relations between units of discourse. They connect the discourse and provide a level of cohesion and textuality. Further, Fairbanks (2016, p. 14) cites Schiffrin’s characterisation of discourse markers in particular as being heavily relied on in scholarly literature. Schiffrin defined discourse markers as “sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk, i.e. nonobligatory utterance-initial items that function in relation to ongoing talk and text” (Schiffrin, 1987a, p.31). In other words, parts of speech that are phrase-initial which connect and structure utterances in conversation. Schiffrin also went on to suggest that they were similar to contextualisation cues and their use is also multifunctional insofar as to combine many simultaneous processes in the construction of discourse, creating coherence and comprehensibility (Schiffrin, 2003, p.58; Schiffrin, 1987b).

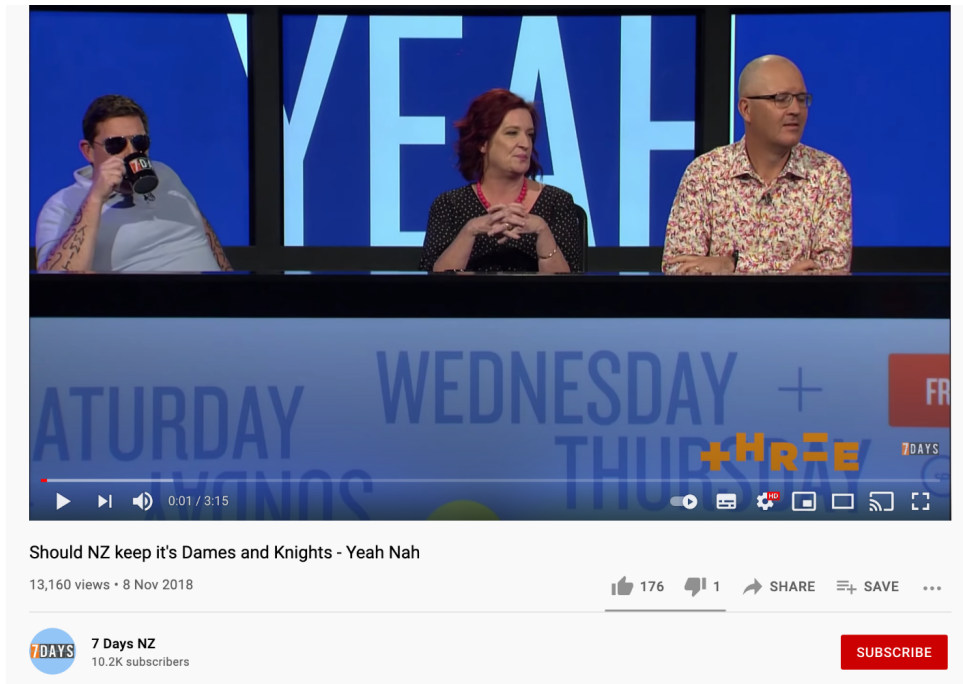
There are numerous and often complex references to ‘yeah nah’ in popular culture and the media, particularly in New Zealand. Among these are the YouTube videos from Newshub (2018)² and KiwiCulture (2019)³, which label the term as being distinctly ‘kiwi’ and belonging to New Zealand English. The KiwiCulture video even mentions the marker as something you “will definitely hear in Kiwi English” with a multitude of various functions and meanings as a discourse marker would, such as yes, no, maybe or nothing. The discourse

² <https://youtu.be/6VZVyGtY8s0?t=105>

³ <https://youtu.be/cEJvBfJBaDI?t=395>

marker is also featured on a recurring segment on the New Zealand comedy show 7 Days, in a debate either for or against an arranged argument (7 Days NZ, 2018)⁴.

Figure 1: 'yeah nah' being used as a segment in the NZ television show, 7 Days (7 Days NZ, 2018)⁵.

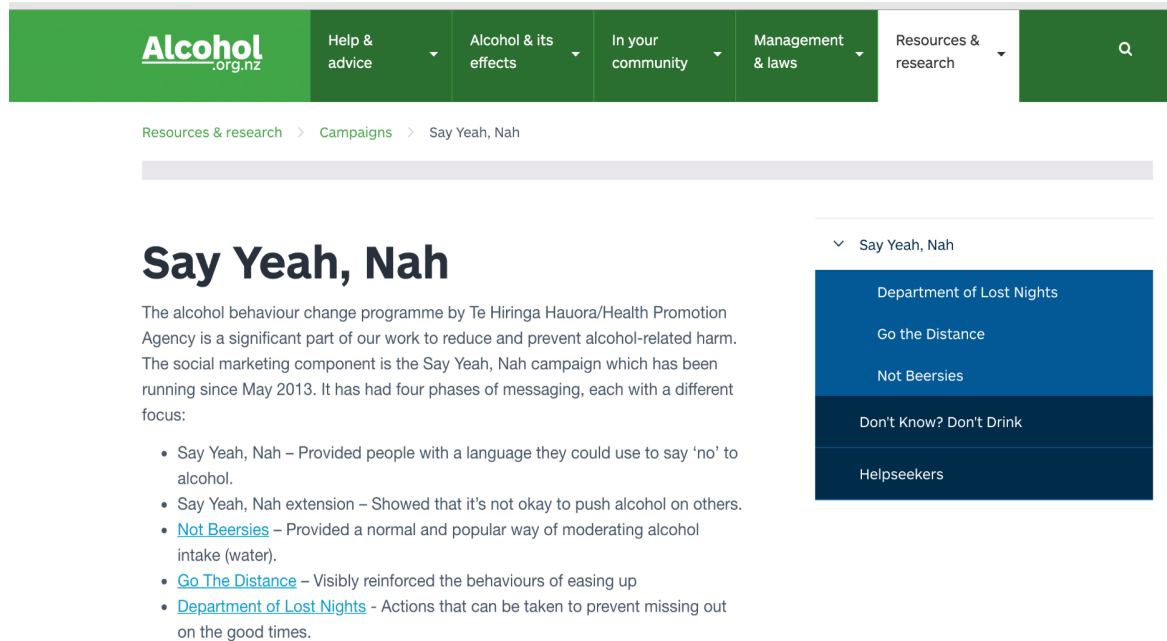


In other words, it has become part of a stereotype pertaining to New Zealanders' way of speaking, and identity. 'Yeah nah' is perhaps more of a spoken marker such as in the aforementioned videos, but its presence has been captured in written form as well. For example, the Health Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Health New Zealand has a social marketing campaign showing people how it's ok to say no to alcohol and not to push alcohol on others. This alcohol behaviour change programme is called 'Say Yeah, Nah' and has been running since 2013 (Health Promotion Agency). This campaign features bus shelter advertising, posters on the street, as well as various online and digital advertising (Health Promotion Agency, 2013, p. 2).

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5QahPwD8_8

⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5QahPwD8_8

Figure 2: the 'Say Yeah, Nah' campaign. Taken from <https://www.alcohol.org.nz/resources-research/campaigns/say-yeah-nah>



Alcohol.org.nz

Help & advice | Alcohol & its effects | In your community | Management & laws | Resources & research

Resources & research > Campaigns > Say Yeah, Nah

Say Yeah, Nah

The alcohol behaviour change programme by Te Hīringa Hauora/Health Promotion Agency is a significant part of our work to reduce and prevent alcohol-related harm. The social marketing component is the Say Yeah, Nah campaign which has been running since May 2013. It has had four phases of messaging, each with a different focus:

- Say Yeah, Nah – Provided people with a language they could use to say 'no' to alcohol.
- Say Yeah, Nah extension – Showed that it's not okay to push alcohol on others.
- [Not Beersies](#) – Provided a normal and popular way of moderating alcohol intake (water).
- [Go The Distance](#) – Visibly reinforced the behaviours of easing up
- [Department of Lost Nights](#) - Actions that can be taken to prevent missing out on the good times.

Say Yeah, Nah

- Department of Lost Nights
- Go the Distance
- Not Beersies
- Don't Know? Don't Drink
- Helpseekers

This suggests a strong written presence of the form as well as a strong spoken presence, encouraging people to actually say the term to their friends and peers.

Other uses of 'yeah nah' are featured on various products to buy. Figure 3 shows 'yea nah', whilst spelt differently, printed on a toy sheep at a New Zealand souvenir shop. This implies that the use of the term is something a tourist will only find in New Zealand. However, this could be exaggerated for marketing purposes.

Figure 3: Stuffed toy sheep from a New Zealand souvenir shop in Tekapo.



The camping chair depicted in Figure 4 is another example of iconography of ‘yeah nah’. It seems to suggest that camping (or the use of the camping chair) is also part of the typical New Zealander stereotype and would denote the user of the chair and ultimately the discourse marker as being a laid-back New Zealander who enjoys sitting and camping outdoors. The product also carries a male stereotype here, evoked with images of camping, tramping, barbecues and the outdoors. Participation and visibility of women in social spheres, like camping, has shown clear levels of gender inequality in the past (see Jónasdóttir & von der Fehr, 2005). Indeed, traditionally, mountains or remote national parks in the past were marketed for men to be ‘tamed’ and ‘conquered’, carrying this persistent male stereotype through to today (see Cronon, 1996; Kinnaird & Hall, 1994). Thus this camping chair is an example of a male-oriented product, one of a number of such products which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4.4.4.

Figure 4: A “yeah nah” product depicting the phrase on a camping chair from a New Zealand store, the Warehouse (<https://www.thewarehouse.co.nz/p/navigator-south-yea-nah-camping-chair/R2231180.html>)



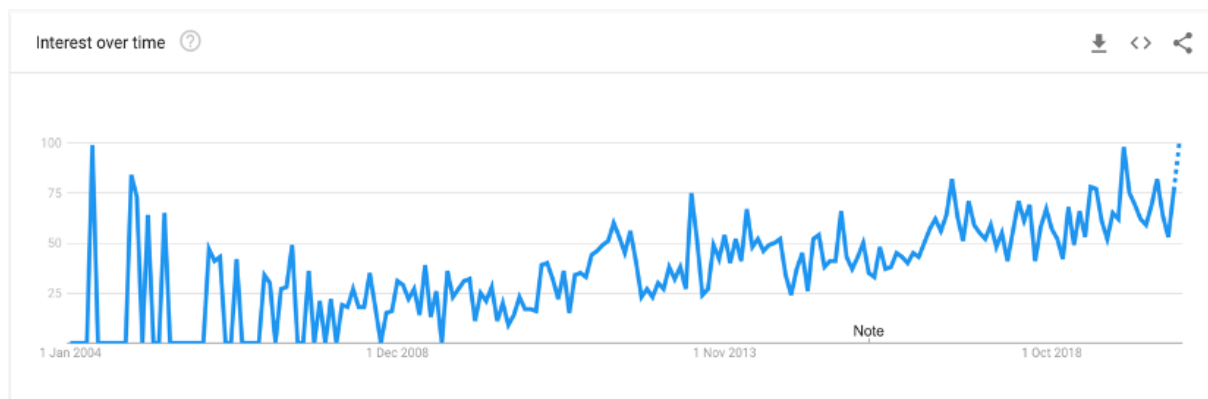
Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the idea of New Zealanders explicitly claiming ‘yeah nah’ as belonging to their own identity, branding it for tourists at souvenir shops as well as for the ‘everyday kiwi bloke’ at the Warehouse. This duality and existence of the products, as well as the media coverage of ‘yeah nah’, has certainly shown further evidence of its salience in New Zealand.

It is also important to look at the history of ‘yeah nah’ and how long it has been in use. This gives more background to the discourse marker and shows how established it is.

2.3 History of ‘yeah nah’

Not much is known about the history of the use of ‘yeah nah’, making it difficult to answer the research questions from the literature. According to Google Trends⁶, ‘interest’ (or web searches) over time world-wide peaks in May 2004. ‘Interest’ in the trend is calculated from a value out of 100 and illustrates the number of searches relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term, for example. The searches for ‘yeah nah’ are on a projected sharp increase from September of 2020. From about 2013 onwards, we can see a general increase in the searches of this term on Google.

Figure 5: Searches over time of “yeah nah” worldwide from 2004-present. Taken from Google Trends.

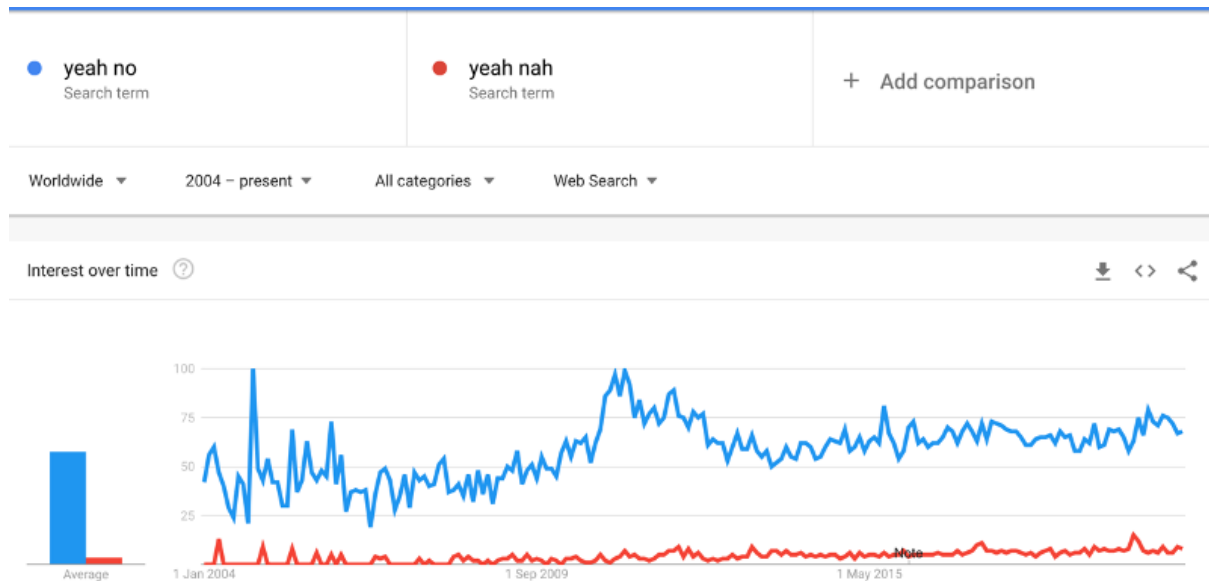


However, anecdotally, it has been used for decades in New Zealand and Australia according to various sources, such as users *Snowgum01* and *Nothingaddsup* on a Reddit post (*Nothingaddsup*, 2019)⁷. On this thread, *Nothingaddsup* starts the post by saying “*why has Aus suddenly started passing 'Yeah, Nah' off as their thing?*”, and *Snowgum01* commented that “*I’m a 51 year old Aussie and not only do I say, it I remember my grandfather saying it so.....*”. This adds evidence to the claim that ‘yeah nah’ is salient enough to be above the level of awareness of speakers. Interestingly, in comparison, the interest in ‘yeah no’ over time on Google is much larger than the interest in ‘yeah nah’. Figure 6 compares the two discourse markers using the same settings as Figure 5 and one can see the stark difference between the two. However, it is possible that this could be more to do with conventionalised spelling, as there seems to be more variation in the spelling of ‘yeah nah’ in products like that in Figure 3, such as ‘yea nah’ and ‘yeah na’. However, largely in the media presented in Chapter 2.2, the spelling in written form like the ‘Say Yeah, Nah’ to Alcohol campaign, appears to be predominately the standard ‘yeah nah’.

⁶ <https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=NZ>

⁷ https://www.reddit.com/r/newzealand/comments/agqc14/why_has_aus_suddenly_started_passing_yeah_nah_off/

Figure 6: Searches over time for ‘yeah no’ and ‘yeah nah’ worldwide, from 2004-present. Taken from Google Trends.

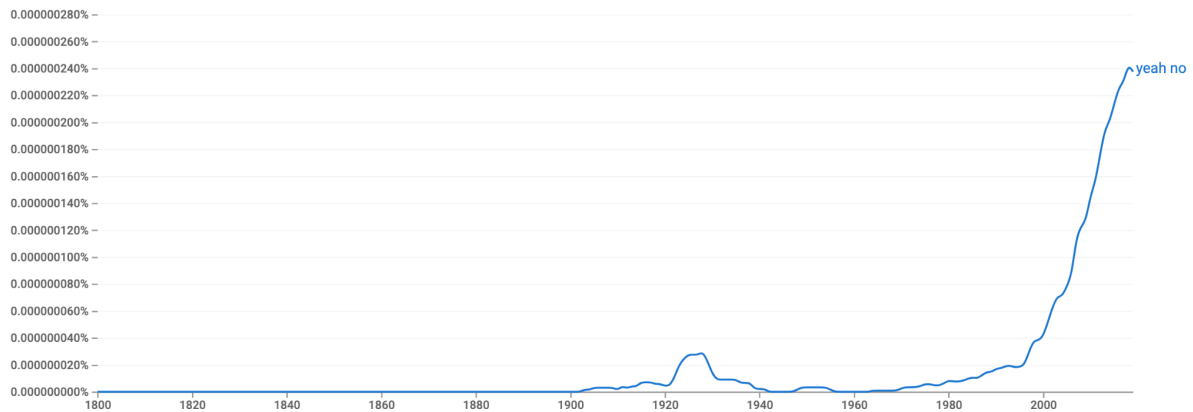


Additionally, Google Books NGram viewer⁸ (Michel et al. & the Google Books Team, 2010), which displays how often a phrase has occurred in a corpus of books from 1800 to today, shows ‘yeah no’ as having a sharp spike and upwards trend in popularity from around 1995 to today. In comparison, there are no valid ngrams to plot for ‘yeah nah’. Based on this difference in online interest between the two, I will argue that ‘yeah nah’ and ‘yeah no’ are different discourse markers. This is also compounded due to the lack of salience for ‘yeah no’ in New Zealand and the stereotypes attached to ‘yeah nah’, just from the media attention alone. Figure 7 therefore indicates a sharp contrast in the use of these two phrases in literature, implying that ‘yeah nah’ is not used in more formal written styles.

⁸ <https://books.google.com/ngrams>

Figure 7: Google Books NGrams Viewer result for 'yeah no' use from 1800-present.

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=yeah+no&year_start=1800&year_end=2019&corpus=26&smoothing=3&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cyeah%20no%3B%2Cc0



Google Trends also has the ability to break down Google searches by region as well. Users searching for 'yeah no', for example, also searched for the top 5 queries demonstrated below in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Searches by region for 'yeah no' and its top 5 related search terms. Taken from Google Trends.

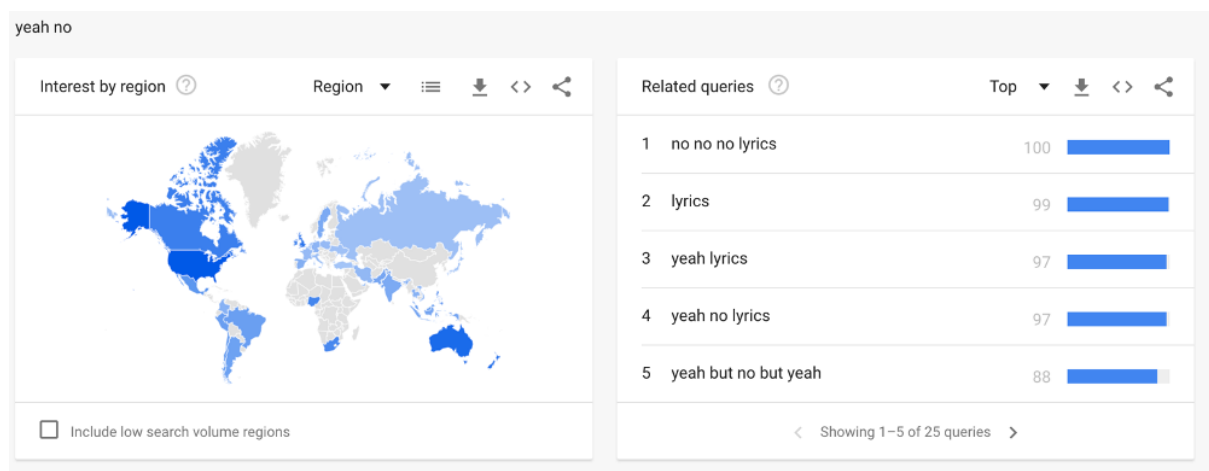
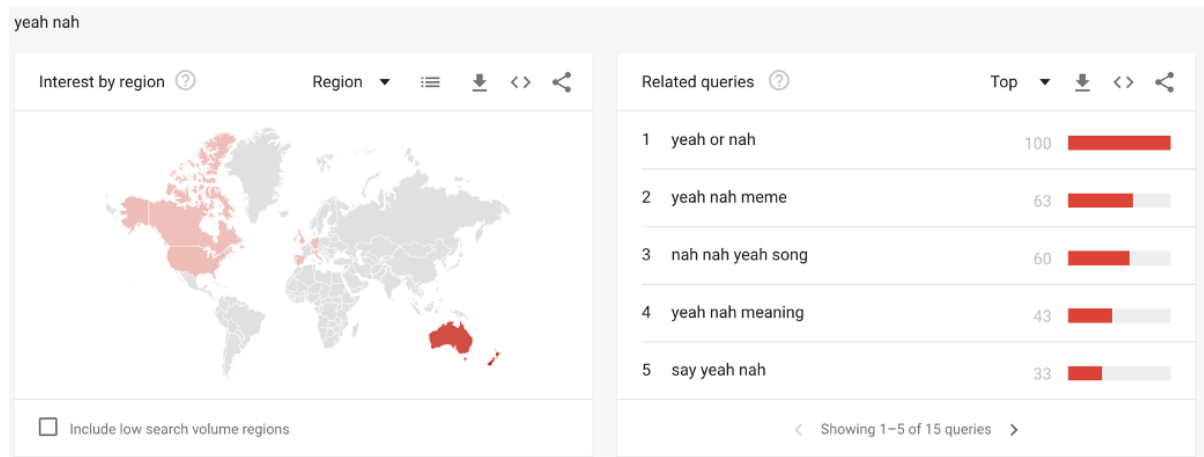


Figure 9: Searches by region for ‘yeah nah’ and its top 5 related search terms. Taken from Google Trends.



To further show the differences in ‘yeah nah’ and ‘yeah no’, the top regions that searched for ‘yeah no’ (including low search volume regions) was the United States, followed by Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the U.K. respectively. The top 5 related queries mainly pertain to songs and their lyrics, which might be the reason why the frequency in Google Trends and Google Books for ‘yeah no’ is much larger than for ‘yeah nah’.

In comparison, ‘yeah nah’ was Google searched in New Zealand the most, followed by Australia. The U.K, United States and Canada were also among the top 5 regions searching for ‘yeah nah’, however individually didn’t receive an interest value higher than 10. This means ‘yeah nah’ is largely unique to Australia and New Zealand for Google interest or searches. In terms of the top 5 related queries, among them include songs with ‘yeah nah’ contained in the lyrics, an internet meme, what ‘yeah nah’ actually means, and finally the ‘say yeah, nah’ campaign from the Health Promotion Agency (2013) as number 5. This is interesting due to the variation in related queries, where people searching for ‘yeah nah meaning’ is actually the fourth most popular search term, justifying the need to define this discourse marker and analyse its context in various examples.

2.4 ‘Yeah no’ studies

Whilst there are no ‘yeah nah’ studies that seem to exist, there are certainly ‘yeah no’ studies that exist in Australian English. Some of these authors, like Burridge and Florey (2002) and Moore (2007), also collapse the use of ‘yeah nah’ into their studies and suggest they’re simply variants of the same discourse marker. I will not be using this idea, but rather, will look at ‘yeah no’ separately to set up how similar the functions will be across the two. I will argue that they are different discourse markers, especially considering the media coverage and attachment to ‘yeah nah’ in New Zealand as well as the extreme dearth of such for ‘yeah no’. The online frequency of both markers also seems to be quite different, as mentioned

above. Looking at ‘yeah no’ separately will also give the opportunity to compare different methods in attributing functions to speech, which is explored in Chapters 5 and 6. As a further point, similar discourse markers also appear in other languages, let alone varieties of English. One example of this is the French *si*. This form indicates confirmation and agreement with negation, removing ambiguity from what was previously said (Burridge and Florey, 2018, p.157). Therefore, having similar but separate discourse markers across different varieties is not unfounded.

Burridge and Florey’s work on ‘yeah no’ presents an initial analysis of its usage in AusE and its various categories of functions (2002). They also look at its spelling and so-called ‘variant forms’ of ‘yeah no’, and explicitly include ‘yeah nah’ as part of the data for this discourse marker. Burridge and Florey’s functions include ‘propositional’ which indicates both assent and dissent, ‘textual’ which has the purpose of cohesion in a conversation or topic, and ‘expressive’ or ‘personal’ which has the purpose of hedging and face-saving by softening the force of an utterance (2002, p.148). As Bower points out (2018, p.12), none of the other ‘yeah no’ studies mention a shutdown function of the phrase, giving a more sarcastic version of disagreement and leaving no opportunity for argument. Bower points out whether this last function is a more recent trend and whether it has emerged within the last decade (p.12). It is my intuition that the sarcasm or joke function can also be extended to the usage of ‘yeah nah’ as well, but this will also be explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Burridge and Florey (2002) used a corpus of spoken language and videotaped television interviews as the basis for their study. The corpus of spoken language was recorded across Australia (p.151). They recorded members of existing friendship and family networks which resulted in 47 Australian-born speakers recorded in 24 conversations with a total of 11 hours of speech (p.151). The videotaped interviews consisted of four 30-minute video-taped episodes of the television programme *Front Up* on SBS (p.152). The four episodes included 17 interviews with 27 interviewees, which was subsequently reduced to 22 interviewees due to some participants being born outside of Australia. This consisted of five hours of speech for the interview data (p.152).

Burridge and Florey don’t seem to suggest any gender difference, with only 7 of the 37 women producing ‘yeah no’ and only 8 of the 35 men producing it (2002, p.153). Among these speakers, a total of 15 tokens were produced by 7 speakers in the conversational corpus compared to 11 tokens by 8 speakers in the interview corpus (p.153). In the 16 hours of spoken language and videotaped television interviews, only 15 of the 72 speakers produced a total of 26 tokens of ‘yeah no’ (2002, p.152). This results in a very uneven distribution of usage. Despite the attention that ‘yeah no’ has garnered, its frequency in speech is actually quite low. Burridge and Florey’s study is over a decade old so perhaps there is the factor of change over time involved as well.

One issue with Burridge and Florey’s study is that the authors had some instances where the purpose of ‘yeah no’ wasn’t entirely clear (2002, p.167). The complexity of the function

makes it difficult to define sometimes. This was taken into account in the present study, especially because Bower (2018) specifically points out the limited function categories in Burrige and Florey's study and makes a point of expanding these for each dataset. Bower observed 149 tweets from Twitter ranging from September-October 2017, as well as data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Both 'yes, no' and 'no, yes' were observed and Table 1 is the summary of categories unique to each corpus and instance.

Table 1: Each function broken down by data set and construction use. Taken from Bower (2018, p.30).

Yes, No: COCA	No, Yes: COCA	Yes, No: Twitter	No, Yes: Twitter
??	Affirmation	Agreement	Agreement
Agreement	Agreement	Clear Misunderstanding	Clear Misunderstanding
Back Channelling	Back-channelling	Convey Misunderstanding	Emphasis of <i>no</i>
Clear Misunderstanding	Clear misunderstanding	Disagreement	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>
Disagreement	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	Emphasis of <i>no</i>	Turn Take
Emphasis of <i>no</i>	Emphasis on no	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	
Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	Emphatic <i>yeah</i>	Hedge	
Emphatic <i>no</i>	Hedge	Joking to Serious	
Emphatic <i>Yeah</i>	Topic Shift	Shut Down	
Filler		Topic Shift	
Hedge		Turn Take	
Joking to Serious			
Positive Emphasis			
Shut Down			
Take Turn			
Topic Shift			
Understanding			

The breakdown of functions amongst the Twitter ‘Yeah, No’ data by Bower (2018, p.34-35) shows how the overwhelming majority (35% of all tokens) had the function of ‘turn take’ followed by ‘shut down’ (22% of all tokens). Thirdly, ‘agreement’ was featured in around 12% of total tokens, and ‘disagreement’ at 10% of total tokens. However, another note to remember is that the discourse marker does seem to fit multiple functions at once, and more context to the conversational examples may be needed to fully count the functions.

Another corpus based study of ‘yeah-no’ by Moore (2007) investigates the use of ‘yeah-no’ in AusE again but discusses how discourse markers are rarely accepted in written discourse. Moore cites the distribution of ‘yeah-no’ as an example of this (2007, p.11). This contradicts what Bower (2018) found in their research mentioned above, although Bower did use Twitter as their form of written discourse. Twitter as a social media site does seem to be its own, less formal style of written communication; it uses short-form messages to communicate with other people instead.

Moore’s main source of data for their corpus was gathered between March 2007 and September 2007 and consisted of radio and television broadcasts of natural conversation (2007, p.27). This data was also supplemented by two additional tokens of ‘yeah-no’ taken from a 2003 television programme and six further tokens from transcripts of episodes of ‘The Panel’ from 1998 (2007, p.27). This meant that a total of 76 ‘yeah-no’ tokens were taken from 46 different speakers for this main source of data. Moore also used the Australian International Corpus of English (also known as ICE-AUS) project which contained a total of 30 ‘yeah-no’ spoken tokens out of a total of one million words gathered between 1991 and 1995 (2007, p.29). The last corpus used was the Monash University Australian English Corpus (also known as the MUAE Corpus), which was collected between 1996 and 1998 and was from young people communicating with strangers, peers and family members (2007, p.30). The MUAE Corpus had a total of 12 yeah-no tokens. Therefore in total, 118 yeah-no tokens were analysed in Moore’s study (2007, p. 31) and has a much larger sample size than Burrige and Florey’s study (2002). Moore’s study seems to conflate sources from such a wide range of different places in order to find enough tokens of ‘yeah no’ for their analysis. This perhaps reflects that ‘yeah no’ isn’t actually used often in every-day, Australian English. On top of this, the distribution of tokens by Moore (2007) across all corpora include all the analysed forms and varieties of ‘yeah no’, including ‘yeah nah’. ‘Yeah nah’ featured 11.9% of 118 total tokens from all corpora which seems to suggest that at the time of publication, ‘yeah nah’ did not feature heavily at all in AusE (Moore, 2007, p.43). This could be different over 10 years later. In contrast, ‘yeah no’ was present in 72.0% of total tokens analysed.

However, while all corpus based studies can be used to observe the frequency of a linguistic form for example, it does have its disadvantages for studying a form that is used mainly in spoken, natural language. The presence of a camera or microphone to record such usage will no doubt have an effect on its speakers and the ‘naturalness’ of the conversation. This is also known as the observer’s paradox, which was referred to in sociolinguistics by Labov (1972). In this work Labov comments how linguists must be able to find out how people talk when

they are not being systematically observed, yet we can only get this data by systematically observing them (p.209). Crystal (2008) also confounds this by adding that whether the linguist is actively participating in a dialogue or acting as this silent observer also influences the way people talk (p.337). They also add that introducing a subject which is likely to engage the participant's entire attention in the conversation can combat this feeling of observation by the speaker (p.337).

In terms of its usage in different contexts, Moore (2007) also analysed all forms of 'yeah no' in the main corpora and assigned them to different functions according to Burrige and Florey's categories (2002), as explained above. As seen in Table 2, the most popular use of 'yeah no' (36% of all 76 tokens here) served both the 'propositional' and 'textual' functions (Moore, 2007, p.44). This meant that the most popular function of using yeah no was by expressing assent or dissent and providing a sense of cohesion in the conversation. In fact, many of Moore's tokens in the main corpus served more than one of Burrige and Florey's functions, perhaps suggesting again the limited categories that Burrige and Florey provided, or otherwise how the markers often serve multiple purposes at once. Indeed, to assess the meaning of 'yeah nah' in different contexts would require a broad consideration of all the different functions it can serve in any given context.

Table 2: Number of tokens from Moore's primary corpus using Burrige and Florey's categories (Moore, 2007, p.44).

Function	Number of tokens	Percentage of tokens
Propositional	12	15.8%
Textual	11	14.5%
Expressive	0	0.0%
Propositional and Textual	28	36.8%
Propositional and Expressive	8	10.5%
Textual and Expressive	13	17.1%
Propositional, Textual and Expressive	4	5.3%
Total number of tokens=	76	

Finally, another relevant discourse marker in the discussion of 'yeah no' is 'no', which has been analysed by Lee-Goldman (2011). They mention that previous studies on 'no' as a discourse marker showed that it had a relatively limited range of usage or only concentrated on one or two uses (Tao, 2003; Fischer, 2000; Ford et al., 2004). Lee-Goldman used natural

recorded conversations in their analysis from mostly two speech corpora; the first is the ICSI Meeting Corpus which contained approximately 72 hours of recorded meetings at the International Computer Science Institute between 2000 and 2002 (p.2628). The second corpus is the Fisher English Training Corpus which consists of several hundred telephone conversations, each approximately 10 minutes long for a total of nearly 2,000 hours of speech data (p.2629). The data appears to be using American English, though it is not explicitly stated. Using this data, Lee-Goldman found that 'no' served as a topic-shift, often using it to shift from a joke to a serious response. The second function was misunderstanding-management, using third-position repair initiator (in other words, using 'no' in a third utterance or 'move') to clarify what the speaker had said in the first position, or in their first utterance. Finally, turn-negotiation was an identified function by Lee-Goldman. They go on to say that each of these new senses are distinct but semantically and pragmatically related to each other due to the properties of indexicality, negation, answerhood and turn-independence (p.2647). They also identified that 'no' differs from other response particles because it can't be used as a full turn as a discourse marker, but it can also be a single turn as an answer to a question, for instance (p.2642). This may mirror the use of 'yeah nah'. 'Yeah nah' can also be used as a single turn, in the case of an answer, or expanding on something that was previously said, in the case of a discourse marker.

2.5 Conclusion

To summarise, the current state of knowledge of 'yeah nah' does seem to be reasonably limited as there is a lack of literature on the discourse marker. There are many pop culture references to it, in the form of various YouTube videos, media clips, television segments and even health campaigns. YouTube videos describing New Zealand slang often denote it as being 'distinctly kiwi' and definitely 'something you will hear in New Zealand'. Some products are also available that feature the discourse marker, branding and commodifying the marker for New Zealanders but also tourists alike.

There is no empirical data to show the origins of 'yeah nah', however anecdotally it has been used for years, maybe even decades by both Australians and New Zealanders alike. Searches for 'yeah nah' online seems to be on an upward trend, however 'yeah nah' online interest seems to be much lower than for 'yeah no'. Indeed, the search interest for 'yeah nah' localises it to mainly New Zealand and Australia, whereas 'yeah no' was searched the most in the U.S. followed by Australia.

Finally, 'yeah no' studies were analysed in their functions due to how the functions are similar to those of 'yeah nah', but we must be cautious in combining them into one discourse marker especially in light of 'yeah nah's specific media attention and presence in pop culture which is lacking for 'yeah no' in New Zealand. On top of this, the 'yeah no' corpora data shows that we need a lot of speech to find tokens. I will combat this by using a survey which also allows us to look at the stereotypes that surround the marker, which corpus analysis wouldn't be capable of capturing.

CHAPTER 3

Questionnaire Methodology

3.1 Question design

As a reminder, the research questions are the following:

1. Who uses ‘yeah nah’?
2. What kind of stereotypes surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’?
3. What context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, and therefore, what does it mean?

A survey was designed in an effort to answer these three questions associated with ‘yeah nah’. This will be achieved by breaking down the survey into three parts:

Part 1: about the participant.

Part 2: about somebody who is most likely to use ‘yeah nah’.

Part 3: likely contexts and therefore the meaning of ‘yeah nah’.

Questions in Part 1 asked the participant about their own demographics, such as their gender, age and highest education level. They were also asked if they use ‘yeah nah’ themselves, as well as if they use NZE or other items of ‘kiwi slang’ very often or never. Part 1 directly answered the first question of this project: who uses ‘yeah nah’? The likely profile of somebody who self-reports using ‘yeah nah’ was made using the demographics questions here. This part of the experiment also highlighted in particular if New Zealand participants recognise if ‘yeah nah’ is a feature of NZE or indeed other varieties of English.

The questions were designed so that nearly the same questions were asked in Part 2, where the participant was asked to imagine the profile of somebody most likely to use ‘yeah nah’, and answer the same various demographics questions for that person. This was enacted by gauging participants’ responses regarding this imagined person’s gender, age and highest education level for example. A comparison was also made between participants’ responses in Part 1 and how it related to their responses in Part 2. What if the likely profile of somebody who self-reported using ‘yeah nah’ (as answered in Part 1) is very different to how participants perceived other users of ‘yeah nah’ (in Part 2)? This kind of analysis answers question 2 of this experiment as a whole: what kind of stereotypes surround somebody who uses ‘yeah nah’?

Part 3 was also used in terms of metalinguistic analysis. What does ‘yeah nah’ actually mean to New Zealanders? What kind of context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, according to the

participants? This provides insight into ‘yeah nah’ in a contemporary setting within New Zealand and helps to answer the third research question, which was what context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, and therefore, what does it mean? Metalinguistic analysis isn’t always accurate in describing the context, but rather it tells us what contexts people think it’s used in. Folk linguistic studies such as that of Boughton’s (2006) showed that some language perceptions from participants were accurate, but others were inaccurate judgements, partly based on stereotypes; Boughton looked at perception of variation in northern urban French pronunciation, where participants heard extracts of speech from people from Nancy and Rennes, and were asked to identify the speaker’s regional background and whether they were urban or rural in origin (p.277). The results showed that the Pays de la Lore respondents were not overly successful at accurately identifying the regional origins of the extracts (p.300). They were nonetheless able to detect some differences between the Nancy and Rennes speakers, however there was also clear evidence of annexation when little or no difference was perceived (p.300). This was mixed with participants relying on stereotypes when some accent difference was perceived (p.300). On top of this, Kuiper states that respondent perceptions about normative language may “have little basis in empirical reality”, however it still has a profound impact on linguistic attitudes and indeed therefore on linguistic behaviour (2005, p.28).

The questions will be available in the Appendix, but crucial questions are listed below:

Part 1: about yourself

Q1

I am a...

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Takatāpui
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q2

Age (years)

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66-75
- ☐ 76-85
- ☐ 86+

Q5

Which ethnic group do you belong to? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ NZ European/Pākehā
- ☐ Māori
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Island Maori
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Other ethnicity: _____

Q7

The country I have lived in for the majority of my life is:

Q12

I use kiwi slang and phrases such as “chur”, “choice”, “sweet as”, “mean as”, “no worries”:

- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

Q13

I say “yeah nah”:

- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

Q14

Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of New Zealand English?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q15

Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of another type of English?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Part 2: about a typical 'yeah nah' user

Q17

When you imagine a typical person who might use ‘yeah nah’, what kind of person do you imagine?

From these demographic categories, indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Takatāpui
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q18

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

Their age (years):

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66-75
- ☐ 76-85
- ☐ 86+

Q21

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

Which ethnic group would they belong to? Select all that might apply.

- ☐ NZ European/Pākehā
- ☐ Māori
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Island Maori
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Other ethnicity: _____

Q29

Any additional comments about this person who would typically use “yeah nah”:

Part 3: contexts that “yeah nah” would appear in

Q30

Thinking of this person who is most likely to say “yeah nah”, how might they use it? What kind of conversation would this person be having? In what context would it appear? Can you give examples of it? Please give as much detail as you can. If you’re not sure, just say “I don’t know”.

In terms of the wording of these questions, the questions regarding ethnicity and the highest level of education achieved were taken directly from the 2018 New Zealand Census (Statistics NZ, 2018, p.86 & 90 respectively). The remaining questions were formulated after consulting Brace (2008) regarding questionnaire design and how exactly to write online questionnaires in particular. This was key to formulating short, mostly tick-box style questions where the question order was strategic to not prime participants about their own usage of ‘yeah nah’, as self-reported in Part 1.

Question 12 asking about ‘kiwi slang’ was composed of terms used in other ‘kiwi slang’ videos, such as How to DAD (2018) and Kiwi Culture (2019) as well as native speaker instinct. The wording of Question 30 involving likely contexts was used to capture a wide variety of answers. Participants could write as much as they wanted, or just write something like ‘I don’t know’ to fulfil the required question’s criteria for an answer. This meant that I was able to gather as much information as I could from the participants that wasn’t able to be captured in other questions or parts.

3.2 Qualtrics survey design

All data was stored on the researcher’s university-affiliated, password-protected account.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the survey had their own block. This ensured that participants could assess the length of the survey using the progress bar and take appropriate breaks if needed. They could also have saved their answers and return later if they needed to, however responses in progress had the ability to still be recorded up to a week after the respondent’s last activity. Participants were not allowed to go back and edit their responses to previous blocks. This ensured that participant’s first and likely more honest answers would be recorded. The ‘prevent ballot box stuffing’ option was also checked which ensured that people couldn’t take the survey more than once. This was achieved by placing a cookie on the respondent’s browser when they submit a response so the next time they click the link, Qualtrics will see this cookie and not permit them to take the survey again. The participant also could not request that their data be destroyed after the completion of the survey, as all data is anonymous and the retrieval of their specific data would be impossible.

The survey was designed on Qualtrics to be completed on a computer browser as well as on a mobile phone or tablet. This ensured maximum completion rate. Individual pages for individual questions was considered, however due to the length of the experiment, individual blocks for each part of the experiment were implemented instead.

Question 3, regarding whether the participant has any other qualification other than that from secondary school, is one of the only questions (both in Part 1 and repeated in Part 2) that was not required, as it was not entirely essential to the analysis but beneficial if it showed a correlation to any of the other questions. If ‘yes’ was selected for this question, it then took them to the next question, where the participant indicated their highest qualification. If ‘no’ was selected, they did not see the next question regarding what their highest qualification was instead. Question 11 regarding whether the participant speaks any other language other than English was also not required. Finally, question 29 regarding any additional comments was also not required due to participants’ general reluctance to complete text-box answers. The final mechanism to mention is that where appropriate, writing ‘I don’t know’ also was a sufficient answer to progress the survey. This was to reduce the work in cleaning the data for the analysis section. The entirety of the survey did not take any longer than 20 minutes.

3.3 HEC Approval

In order to achieve final ethics approval, the Kaiārahi for the College of Arts was consulted and I was advised on how to best recruit Māori participants in this survey. This advice was then incorporated into final Information and Consent sheets, a document containing the questions for the participants and a link to the survey, a document containing the exact wording for recruiting participants on social media, as well as the HEC Low Risk Application Form. The Information and Consent forms, social media post and the list of questions will be listed in the Appendix. Final approval was given for this experiment on 16 November 2020.

3.4 Recruitment and participants

Contacts of the researcher were approached online either via Facebook or email for their participation of the survey. The researcher also shared this message to the UCSA Noticeboard Facebook page; Te Akatoki - Māori Students Association University of Canterbury Facebook page; and Linguistics at Canterbury Facebook page. These contacts were also asked to share with their networks as well. Included in the participant recruitment message was the following key criteria: participants must be over 18 years of age and familiar with NZE. The latter criterion was aimed at analysing perspectives on ‘yeah nah’ within a New Zealand context, however many participants claimed they were still familiar with ‘yeah nah’ with minimal NZE contact. For example, some participants were living overseas or maybe were not familiar with NZE terms and slang included in Question 12, pertaining to their own use of “chur”, “choice”, “sweet as”, “mean as”, and “no worries”. There ended up being 11 participants who were currently living overseas and 111 who were currently living in New Zealand. I did not separate these peoples’ answers at any point; this was done to include all

New Zealand expatriates, people who may have been familiar with the marker but did not see it as distinctly ‘kiwi’, or had experience with it outside of New Zealand, which all would have contributed to the overall picture of the discourse marker and how it was used.

Participants were assured that their name was not recorded anywhere on the survey, so all responses were anonymous. The demographic-type questions are vague enough that they cannot be used to identify participants either. The approximate goal was to have 120 participants for the survey, with about a 50/50 gender balance across women and men. This goal was in place in the hope of avoiding any inaccurate gender inferences. Participants were taken to the information and consent pages before completing the survey. They were informed that their anonymous data may be made available online as supplementary material as well as in the form of a publicly-available thesis. They were also encouraged to take breaks if needed. Once the estimated respondent quota was reached, the survey was terminated and the data was then used for analysis.

In total, 177 participants’ data was recorded in Qualtrics. Participants were excluded for analysis if the ‘finished’ status of survey completion was false. In other words, incomplete data or answers were not included in analysis and these participants were thus removed for final analysis. After exclusion criteria, 122 participants were eligible for analysis. Due to the low numbers of participants in the 66-75 and 76-85+ age categories, these were combined into a 66+ age category.

Table 3: Distribution of participants eligible for analysis by age and gender.

Age	Gender				Total
	<i>Man</i>	<i>Woman</i>	<i>Nonbinary</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>	
18-25	16	28	2		46
26-35	4	13			17
36-45	5	15	1	1	22
46-55	10	8			18
56-65	5	9			14
66+	1	4			5
Total	41	77	3	1	122

As seen from Table 3, I did not end up reaching a 50:50 gender goal. As we know from the results from previous online questionnaires, women are typically more likely to respond to surveys. Using FaceBook and my connections on social media would have been a big contributor to this when I distributed the Qualtrics link and the message accompanying it. What this means for data analysis is that there is a slight bias towards a female view of the marker, which will be kept in mind for the analysis.

3.5 Tidying of data

The data was extracted directly from Qualtrics and uploaded into an R Script made by the researcher. The data was then tidied and organised in R Studio (2020).

CHAPTER 4

Quantitative analysis

4.1 Introduction

The results from Parts 1 and 2 of the survey will be analysed quantitatively in order to help answer the first two research questions: 1. Who uses ‘yeah nah’?; and 2. What kind of stereotypes surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’?

4.2 Method

For the survey questions involving ethnicity, participants were permitted to choose as many categories as they wished. As the question and responses were taken from the 2018 New Zealand Census (Statistics NZ, p.86), the most likely responses were listed for a New Zealand participant (NZ European/Pākehā, Māori, Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan, Niuean, Chinese and Indian), and an ‘other’ fill-the-box category was given as an option as well (see the appendix for the layout of the questionnaire). In Excel, these ethnicity categories were recoded where appropriate; the ‘Pasifika’ label was introduced to group the Pacific Island nationalities, and the ‘NZ European/Pākehā’ label was shortened in the graphs where necessary. The ‘other’ responses were kept as ‘other’ and were not investigated further due to their low numbers.

In figures 10-13, responses were presented and calculated in Excel as percentages of the relevant totals.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 ‘Yeah nah’ in NZE

Table 4 presents the responses given about whether ‘yeah nah’ is a feature of NZE. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that it was a feature. In Table 5, on the other hand, participants also overwhelmingly agreed that ‘yeah nah’ is not a feature of another variety of English. Table 6 also cements this idea that the discourse marker is indeed salient in New Zealand and is in current use with just over 90% of participants claiming they know New Zealanders who say ‘yeah nah’. In short, respondents attribute the discourse marker just to NZE, despite its potential occurrence in other countries, such as Australia or North America.

Table 4: Responses given regarding whether ‘yeah nah’ is a feature of NZE.

Response given	Q14 - Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of New Zealand English?
Yes	119
No	3
Grand total	122

Table 5: Responses given regarding whether ‘yeah nah’ is a feature of another variety of English.

Response given	Q15 - Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of another type of English?
Yes	30
No	92
Grand total	122

Table 6: Responses given regarding whether participants know New Zealanders who say ‘yeah nah’.

Response given	Q16- Do you know New Zealanders who say “yeah nah”?
Yes	110
No	12
Grand total	122

Participants also reported their own frequency of NZE slang (defined in the questionnaire as kiwi slang and phrases such as “chur”, “choice”, “sweet as”, “mean as” and “no worries”). The most popular category was ‘sometimes’ at 39%, followed by ‘often’ at 30%.

4.3.2 Gender

The focus of this quantitative section is of the people who say ‘yeah nah’, how well does their imagined typical user match up with their own demographics? Figure 10 demonstrates the percentage of responses total across gender. It highlights how women were the only participants to use the ‘very often’ category for frequency of the discourse marker, and had a

higher proportion of the ‘sometimes’ category than men as well. However, men used ‘often’ more, so possibly about the same proportion of men say ‘often’ or ‘very often’ too.

Figure 10: Percentage of Participants Who Reported ‘how often they say ‘yeah nah’.

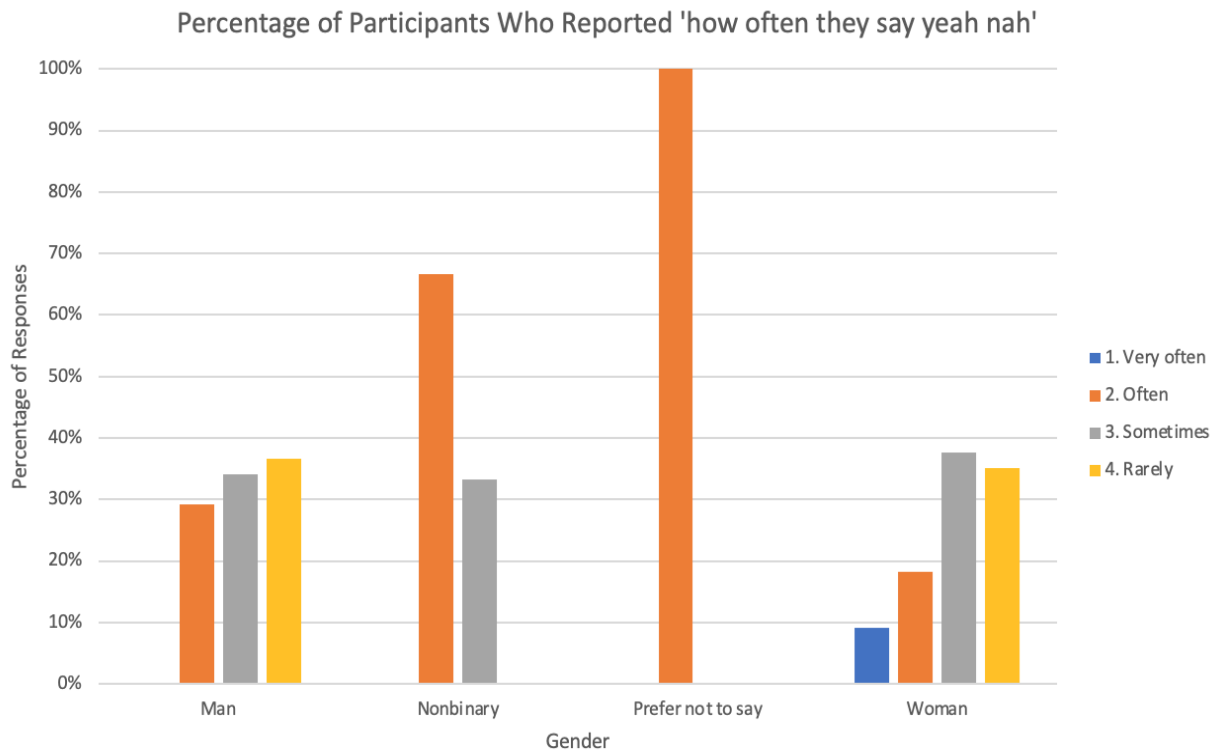
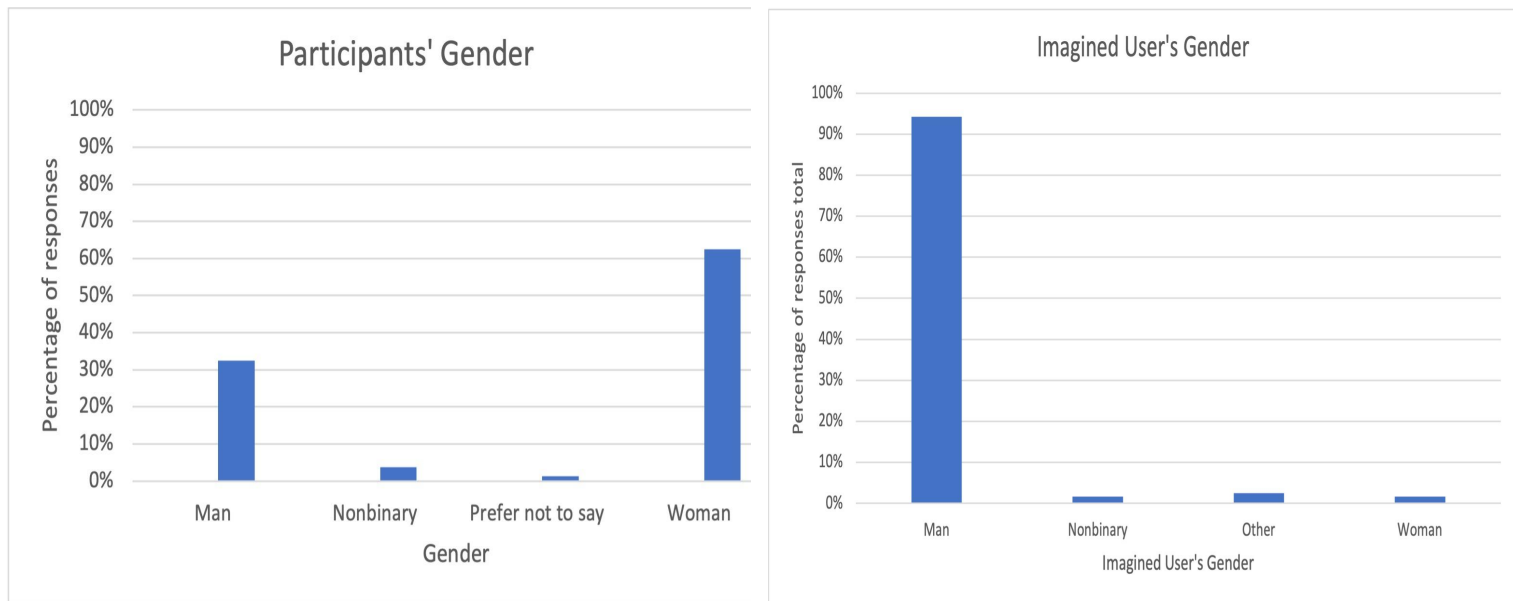


Figure 11 demonstrates the side-by-side comparison of the participants’ gender versus their imagined user’s gender. For the left-hand plot, participants who selected ‘rarely’ for whether they use ‘yeah nah’ were removed. This was in order to show the gender of those who said they themselves use the marker, versus all participants’ ImaginedGender.

Figure 11: Participants' Gender versus Imagined User's Gender.

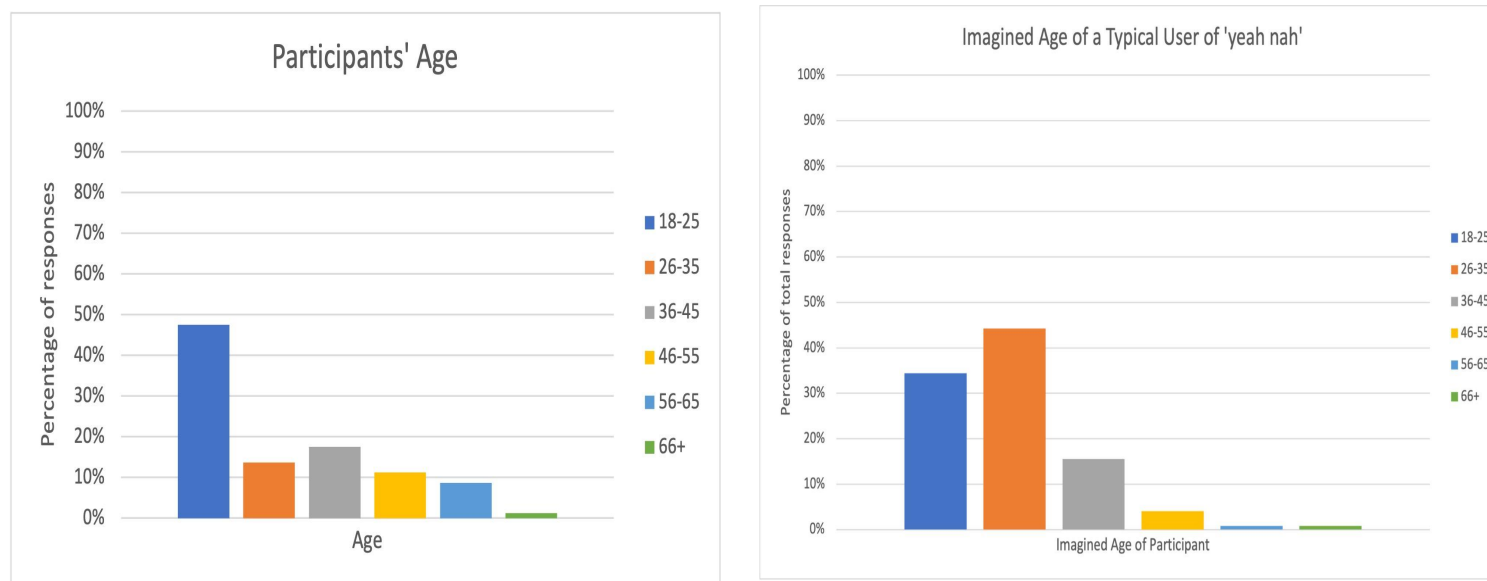


There seems to be an overwhelming preference for the male category for imagined gender for all participants. This is interesting given the participants' own gender distribution.

4.3.3 Age

Figure 12 demonstrates the side-by-side comparison of participants' age versus their imagined user's age. Again, for the left-hand plot, participants who selected 'rarely' for if they use 'yeah nah' were removed. This was to show the age of those who said they themselves use the marker, versus all participants' ImaginedAge for their typical user.

Figure 12: Participants' age versus imagined age of a typical 'yeah nah' user.

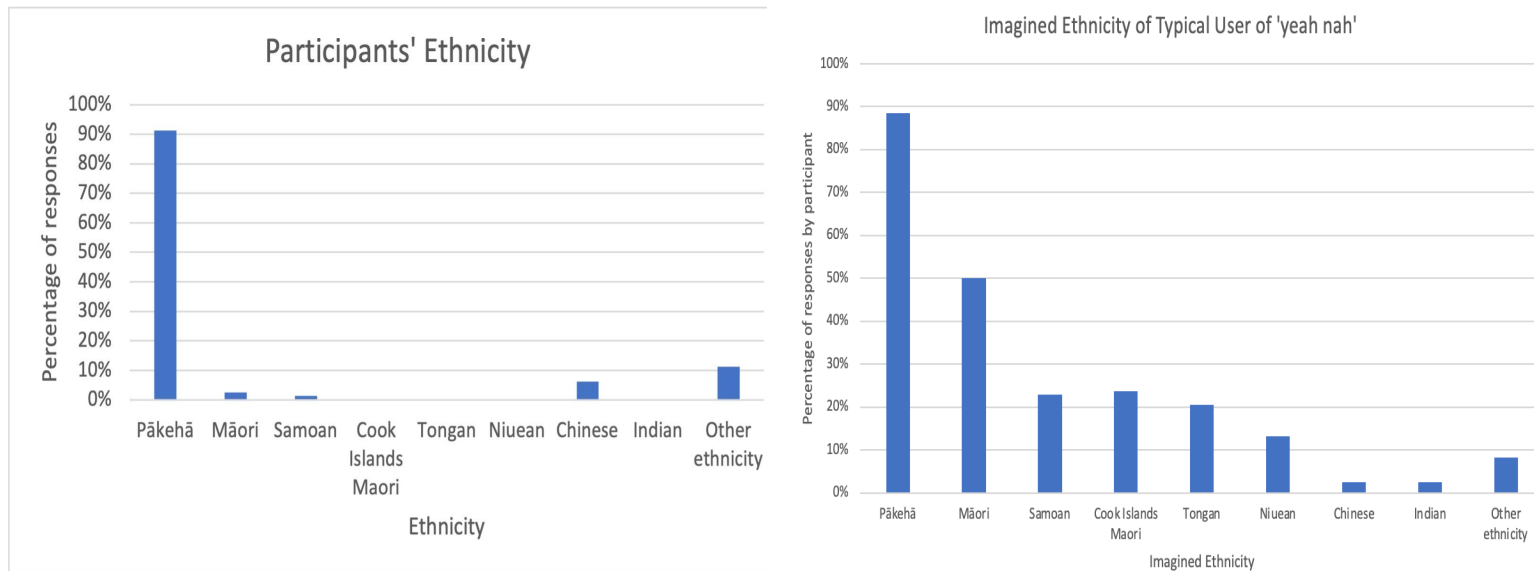


These participants' own age was most likely to be around the 18-25 range, which is unsurprising given how the survey was shared around many university contacts. However, participants also imagined someone a bit older as a typical user (26-35), although 35% of the responses still imagined a user aged 18-25.

4.3.4 Ethnicity

The selection of categories in respect to the ethnicity groups is much more diverse than it was for the participants themselves. Again, the left-hand plot shows participants' responses who did not choose 'rarely' for whether they use 'yeah nah', versus all participants' Imagined Ethnicity.

Figure 13: Imagined ethnicity of participants versus ethnicity of typical ‘yeah nah’ user. The responses per ethnicity category were averaged. Participants selected as many categories as they wished.



The Māori and Pasifika categories were much more likely to be chosen in the ImaginedEthnicity question than in the OwnEthnicity question. There is still a very high number of Pākehā selected in the ImaginedEthnicity too. 57 people (or 46.7% of participants) selected Pākehā only and not any other ethnicity category additionally.

4.3.5 Responses across different groups

I also investigated whether one group of participants had a different stereotype (amongst gender, age and ethnicity) to another group of participants. This was investigated for participants who answered ‘rarely or sometimes’ versus ‘very often or often’ in the question regarding their own use of ‘yeah nah’. However, these two groups’ stereotypes of the typical ‘yeah nah’ user were not only very similar to each other, but also reflective of the overall picture found in Figures 11, 12 and 13. For instance, among the 36 participants in the ‘very often or often’ category, 41.67% imagined a person aged 18-25, and 38.89% imagined a person aged 26-35. Similarly, among this group of people, 86% imagined a Pākehā saying it

(31 responses averaged by the 36 participants) and 44% Māori (16 responses). They also demonstrated a strong gender stereotype, of which 88.89% imagined a male saying it.

In the ‘sometimes or rarely’ participant group (of which there were 86 participants), 46.51% of participants imagined somebody aged 26-35 and 31.40% selected 18-25 years old. Similarly, 90% imagined a Pākehā saying it (77 responses from 86 participants) and 52% Māori (45 responses). 96.51% of these participants also imagined a male. Whilst slight, this difference in gender stereotype across the two groups (88.89% versus 96.51%) suggests that if you don’t use ‘yeah nah’ yourself, you have a slightly stronger male-oriented stereotype for the discourse marker.

This same response pattern was found when splitting the participants into two groups for who answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for the question regarding whether ‘yeah nah’ was a feature of another type of English; however only 30 participants answered ‘yes’ versus 92 who answered ‘no’, resulting in very skewed results across the two groups. Similarly, I investigated some response patterns amongst the respondents who answered ‘New Zealand’ versus other countries mentioned in asking what country they spent the majority of their life in. I investigated responses amongst these two groups in the following questions: reporting the frequency of their own ‘kiwi slang’ usage, own frequency of ‘yeah nah’ usage, whether ‘yeah nah’ is a feature of NZE, and if they know New Zealanders who use ‘yeah nah’. However, the number of people who responded with countries other than New Zealand for the OwnMajorityCountry question was only 10, which means that when I omit them, I get the same overall pattern of results. Nothing here is skewed by including the people who haven’t spent the majority of their time in New Zealand.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Participants’ Reflection of the survey

Firstly, I will discuss some of the participants’ reflection of the survey before analysing the language attitudes and main stereotypes brought up in the survey.

Parts 1 and 2 of the questionnaire were designed in a way that would seek to find any attitudes and stereotypes around the usage of ‘yeah nah’ and who is most likely to use it. However, some participants did not have a stereotype or a typical user in mind whilst completing this, and thus felt that the answers available did not reflect this. This was illustrated in Question 29 asking about any additional comments about somebody who used ‘yeah nah’. For example, one participant said *“some [of] these responses need "all of the above””*. Whilst nearly all of the questions were required, the design of the survey was set up to imagine somebody in particular and thus this imagined person may not have been easily captured in all of the demographic questions.

Another participant said *“I think the main thing would be not their ethnicity or qualifications, but how long they’ve lived in NZ and whether their friends say yeah nah”*. The survey did not directly look into how long this imagined user had lived in New Zealand, but rather what the country was that they had spent the majority of their life in. Likewise, for whether the participants’ friends say ‘yeah nah’, it was at least partially captured in whether the participant knew New Zealanders who said ‘yeah nah’ themselves. The comment itself also provides insight into how the participant lends more weight to the social circles and networks set up around the imagined user, rather than specific demographics and characteristics. Similarly, one participant mentioned that *“it’s in such widespread usage that it was very arbitrary picking gender/education categories”*.

Amongst the participants, whether the imagined user lived in a suburban, rural or urban area yielded no significant difference across the categories. However, one participant mentioned specifically a rural farmer type of person, *“with a low voice... similar to the typical “kiwi bloke” portrayed on Tui and other beer ads”*. This participant was drawing on not only the ‘kiwi’ (bloke) stereotype perpetuated in the media, but also on specific people and personas when answering the demographic questions. This idea of a ‘kiwi bloke’ will be explored more in Section 4.4.6. Other stereotypes presented in this section also drew on ethnicity. Whilst one participant mentioned that ‘yeah nah’ was quite a Pākehā saying, in keeping with the majority of participants’ responses for imagined ethnicity, another participant mentioned that they *“had experiences with nz european and Maori people who commonly use this phrase. I think in media it is more associated with Maori/Samoan/Tongan etc”*. This supports the idea that whilst participants were much more likely to imagine a Pākehā saying it, there are still media clips and representations in some peoples’ minds of non-Pākehā people saying it.

In Question 29, one participant mentioned that ‘yeah nah’ can be used by *“playing with ‘new zealandness’ in the way they speak, who is maybe using it to undermine authority (e.g. in commenting on official things)”*. This further ties in with the idea that the discourse marker is ‘just part of the way we speak’.

Finally, one participant mentioned that ‘yeah nah’ is very different from ‘choice’ or ‘chur’ which were terms included in Question 12 asking about participants’ own use of ‘kiwi slang’. The question itself used ‘choice’ and ‘chur’ as examples of other ‘kiwi slang’ that New Zealanders associate with NZE, but in future perhaps other examples would be beneficial in demonstrating this slang for participants. Among the participants who potentially thought ‘yeah nah’ belonged to another type of English, one explicitly said *“maybe Australians also say it”*, indicating perhaps the hesitancy in recognising it as such.

4.4.2 ‘Yeah nah’ in NZE

The overwhelming majority of participants agreed that the discourse marker is a feature of NZE, and two-thirds of participants also agreed that it’s not a feature of another variety of

English. This upholds the belief that New Zealanders tend to claim ‘yeah nah’ as their own, despite its potential use across Australia, the U.K., United States and Canada. It is possible that because ‘yeah nah’ contributes so much to the identity of New Zealanders, it is seen as just uniquely ‘kiwi’ and is therefore hard to see it being attached to another variety of English. This further adds evidence to how the linguistic form has been established as a significant cultural object. The portrayal of the discourse marker within New Zealand media (as seen in Section 2.2) would further add to its insular focus and usage, rather than attributing it to another country or variety of English. The overwhelming majority of participants also claim they know other New Zealanders who say the discourse marker, further cementing it as a salient term in current use today. It is not unfounded to assume that the marker therefore does carry particular language stereotypes in the context of New Zealand.

4.4.3 Participants’ Reported Frequency of ‘yeah nah’

Figure 10 demonstrates participants’ own frequency of ‘yeah nah’. For women, the most selected category was sometimes at nearly 40% of the time, followed by rarely at about 35% of the time. Women reported ‘very often’ the most out of any other gender, which is interesting given the male-centric stereotype reported by participants in their ImaginedGender. Comparatively, the most selected category for men was ‘rarely’ at nearly 40% of the time, and their second largest category was ‘sometimes’, at about 35%. One point to make here, however, is whether different people draw the line differently between ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’, for example, or ‘very often’ and ‘often’. Therefore, we should be cautious in making any definite conclusions about women self-reporting ‘very often’ at a higher rate than men, for example.

4.4.4 Age Stereotypes

First, we will look at some definitions of the word stereotype and how it ties into the age, ethnicity and particularly the gender stereotypes brought up in the survey.

‘Stereotype’ was first used by Lippmann in the field of social science (1922) and Allport gave it a theoretical background in 1954 (in Katz, 1991). Lippmann describes a stereotype as the single picture in one’s head when describing a group of people, often assuming these people share more than one characteristic (1922). These assumptions can be rational or irrational and can pertain to ethnicity, gender or age often with the purpose of creating in-groups and out-groups. Peabody (1967; 1985) shows that stereotypical traits carry a descriptive and evaluative component, carrying a positive, negative or neutral connotation. Allport suggests that these stereotypes are normally adopted from second-hand sources within their own culture, such as from their parents or the mass media (1954), which highlights the importance of the media’s portrayal of ‘yeah nah’. Harding comments that these stereotypes can be shared among one’s own group but can vary in respect to situations, concepts and people (1968).

Figure 12 should be regarded with some skepticism due to the skewed number of participants within each category. For example, there were only 5 people in the 66+ years old category, compared to 46 in the 18-25 years old category. Having said that, from these figures as well as Table 4 (the distribution of participants eligible for analysis; see Section 3.4), we see that there was a high representation from the 18-25 year old category, which isn't unusual given that the survey was shared among university contacts who are typically within this age range.

Additionally, all participants imagined a person likely from age 25-35 saying the discourse marker. Participants themselves were typically 18-25 years old, so this can be seen as a near match in how they perceive themselves as 'yeah nah' users, versus what all participants perceive of other 'yeah nah' users. Again, as this survey was shared among university contacts, it is possible that other older postgraduate students also completed the survey. Even so, the preference of the 26-35 year old age bracket to this ImaginedAge question is interesting. This could be attributed to many salient (male) New Zealand personas and caricatures being younger and around this age. For example, the national rugby team of New Zealand, the All Blacks, have a mean age which is within this bracket; according to the New Zealand national stereotype wikipedia entry (2021)⁹, rugby players, sports and male 'toughness' are also seen as part of the typical 'kiwi' stereotype. Most rugby players in the past also have their careers within this age group. It's possible that additionally attributing it to this 26-35 age group is due to the participants believing they don't hear it as much within their own age group, and neither with their parents' age group, so they select a slightly older group than themselves.

4.4.5 Ethnicity Stereotypes

Ethnicity also provides more opportunities to look into the typical user of 'yeah nah' and the stereotypes that emerge from its usage. As a reminder, participants could choose more than one ethnicity.

Participants themselves were nearly 90% NZ European or Pākehā, with only a small representation of other ethnicities and the Pasifika and Māori communities. In contrast, participants imagined a more diverse typical user, with other ethnicities coming into the equation. For example, Figure 11 demonstrates that nearly 90% of participants imagined a Pākehā person, 50% a Māori person, and around 20% for Samoan. 46.7% of participants selected only the Pākehā category.

There seems to be a reasonable match of participants' ethnicity who reported their own 'yeah nah' usage to every participants' imagined user's ethnicity. Most participants who used 'yeah nah' were Pākehā and participants also equally imagined a Pākehā saying it. The more diverse responses in Figure 11, however, suggests some increase in imagining minority groups saying the marker in peoples' characterological representations. This is especially apparent as Māori was also chosen at 50% of the time for ImaginedEthnicity from all

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_New_Zealand#National_stereotypes

participants. It is also possible that, similar to Urciuoli's study (2009), the typical user's ethnicity would vary across the different ethnic communities. Urciuoli found in multicultural programmes at university level, 'culture' was linked to racial markedness, but in spoken conversation among students of colour, culture was seen as signalling racial markedness within the domains of subjectivity, family, class and location (2009, p.21). This idea is further compounded by the fact that Māori and Pasifika representation in the survey data was low, despite the efforts by the researcher to diversify the responses in contacting various community groups at the University of Canterbury.

For many people, imagining a typical 'kiwi' saying 'yeah nah' means that participants are imagining a male New Zealander, as evidenced by Figure 11. There is some evidence that a kiwi stereotypical male may be Māori as well however. For example, prominent figures like Billy T. James, who was seen as a key figure in the New Zealand comedy scene¹⁰; *How to Dad*; and various young All Blacks players like Aaron Smith and Liam Messam are Māori. Despite these figures however, there are still stronger ties to the typical 'kiwi' being Pākehā, especially when considering books like Phillips' *A Man's Country?: the Image of the Pakeha Male*. Additionally, the Wikipedia entry for the national stereotype for New Zealand describes such male as 'the pioneering type'. Further, the site New Zealand A-Z explicitly states that "the stereotypical Kiwi male is assumed to be a heterosexual of Anglo-Celtic origin, although Māori men are often seen as embodying many of the characteristics described above" (2015). Thus having all participants imagining predominantly a Pākehā, followed by Māori, male is consistent with this national image. This is especially true when you consider, again, that 57 of the 122 respondents chose Pākehā only for their Imagined Ethnicity.

4.4.6 Gender stereotypes

Finally, Figures 10 and 11 demonstrate a strong gender stereotype towards the discourse marker. More specifically, the large majority of all participants imagine a male saying 'yeah nah'. There is often a salient stereotype associated with a kiwi male (such as *How to Dad* and Fred Dagg¹¹), but there is no salient equivalent for a typical kiwi female. This is still a working hypothesis as there seems to be a lack of research on this kiwi female stereotype. Speakers are invoking the image of a stereotypical 'kiwi', or the national stereotype, which in turn is the image of a 'kiwi bloke'.

Indeed, many salient, national stereotypes are male. This is the case for the countries of France, England, Australia, Italy, the United States, Germany or Russia. For example, when you search Google Images for 'French stereotype', a 'Frenchman Starter Pack' picture collage comes up, which includes a moustache.

¹⁰ <https://www.nzonscreen.com/profile/billy-t-james>

¹¹ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/91400934/john-clarke-the-man-behind-new-zealand-cultural-icon-fred-dagg-has-died>

Figure 14: Frenchman Starter Pack image, taken from

https://www.reddit.com/r/starterpacks/comments/9waoni/french_stereotypes_starter_pack/



Similarly, the first image on Google Images for 'English stereotype' is a depiction of an older gentleman, with a bushy moustache and beer, and holding an umbrella under the rain.

Figure 15: English stereotype image taken from Google Images.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/26/british-stereotypes-please-mention-war>



When searching Google for ‘what are some New Zealand stereotypes’, one of the first results only shows a male stereotype and takes you to the Culture of New Zealand Wikipedia page (2021)¹².

Figure 16: screenshot from Google search for ‘what are some New Zealand stereotypes’.

People also ask

What are some Kiwi stereotypes? ^

The Kiwi male

The stereotypical New Zealand male is essentially a pioneer type: he is perceived to be rural, strong, unemotional, democratic, has little time for high culture, good with animals (particularly horses) and machines, and is able to turn his hand to nearly anything.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_New_Zealand...

[Culture of New Zealand - Wikipedia](#)

Search for: [What are some Kiwi stereotypes?](#)

This entry was informed by Jock Phillips’ book called *A Man's Country?: the Image of the Pakeha Male, a History* (1987) but is taken directly from the Wikipedia page (2021):

The stereotypical New Zealand male is essentially a pioneer type: he is perceived to be rural, strong, unemotional, democratic, has little time for high culture, good with animals (particularly horses) and machines, and is able to turn his hand to nearly anything. This type of man is often presumed to be a unique product of New Zealand's colonial period but he shares many similarities with the stereotypical American frontiersman and Australian bushman. New Zealand men are supposed to still have many of these qualities, even though most New Zealanders have lived in urban areas since the late nineteenth century. This has not prevented New Zealanders seeing themselves (and being seen) as essentially country people and good at the tasks which country life requires.

Under this ‘kiwi male’ stereotype in Wikipedia, there is also an entry regarding ‘the hard man’:

The hard man: New Zealand men have often been stereotyped as strong, unemotional and prone to violence. For many years this was seen as a good thing, and was best embodied by All Black Colin Meads. Voted 'New Zealand player of the century' by New Zealand Rugby Monthly magazine, Meads was the second All Black to be sent off the field, and once played a

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_New_Zealand#National_stereotypes

match with a broken arm. Although he was known to assault other players during games, this was generally approved of as 'enforcement' of the 'spirit of the game'. He was also a supporter of sporting contact with apartheid South Africa. In recent decades the macho attitude has been both criticised and reviled as dangerous both to men who embody it and those around them. It has been blamed for New Zealand's culture of heavy drinking and its high male suicide rate. However it still has its supporters, with some commentators claiming that the more recent All Blacks do not have enough 'mongrel'.

The latter entry in particular highlights just how salient the idea of masculinity is in New Zealand and how strong and specific these caricatures are as well. These two entries further justify the fact that a salient female caricature doesn't really exist, save for the more obscure Lyn of Tawa caricature of a New Zealand female (see Duncster, 2006)¹³. Thus when participants are drawing on their national stereotype for New Zealand, they're more likely to associate it with a male due to this tendency. For future research, it would be beneficial to incorporate this into another questionnaire or pilot study to see if this working hypothesis has indeed made an effect on the survey results. In the future I would ask participants to perhaps list 5 national stereotypes or personas, and see whether participants would mention any female stereotypes.

Even the use of 'kiwi' is problematic and carries a gender stereotype in and of itself. According to the Miriam Webster dictionary, 'kiwi' means "capitalized : a native or resident of New Zealand —used as a nickname" (n.d.). However, the use of 'kiwi stereotype' in conjunction with these strictly male figures and images means that 'kiwi' has become to be indexed as a term for stereotypical males at the exclusion of female New Zealanders and New Zealand personas. This was certainly true in its origins as it was used to refer to the New Zealand soldiers (who were predominantly men) mainly throughout the second World War. On top of this, the symbol of the kiwi was used in many regiments post-World War II and had become common usage in many wars that New Zealanders were involved in. This exclusion of the image of the 'kiwi' woman is further evidenced by the fact that New Zealand has historically identified itself with this "pioneering", tough and rural male, as cited in Phillip's book *A Man's Country?*. The association from the media that the discourse marker is 'just what kiwis say' therefore aligns itself strongly with this strong gender stereotype. Having this apparent relationship between 'yeah nah' and 'kiwi' also reinforces this male-centric image.

Feeding into this working hypothesis, there is also literature that supports the idea that when somebody is asked to imagine a non-gender specific 'person', they are more likely to imagine a male. Silveira calls this the people=male bias (1980, p.166). They go on to say that the general-man words category is quite large (words such as to fraternize, guys, chairman, brotherly, fellow) and includes words that don't necessarily share all features with 'man' and 'he', thus giving them a general use for all genders (p.166). Hardin and Banaji also suggested that gender assignment is an automatic cognitive process (1993). Bailey, LaFrance and

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZe4O7Ct8mo&t=6s>

Dovidio (2020) completed research on this androcentric tendency to associate men with people using adaptations of the implicit association test (p.307). Results from three studies showed that their participants associated general ‘human’ concepts (eg. person) with men more than women, and these IAT associations were larger for male (as opposed to female) participants as well as participants exposed to a male-emphasising term for humanity, like *mankind* (p.307). Participants were more likely to notice a semantic redundancy between being male and being human, compared to the same redundancy in regards to women (p.307). In terms of the current study, it is possible that when participants were prompted to “indicate the category of person you would most expect to use ‘yeah nah’”, they imagined a male immediately, further resulting in this large gender bias for the use of ‘yeah nah’. As the people=male bias is an automatic process, the response from participants could’ve been reasonably immediate. If I were to do this questionnaire again, I would perhaps reword the question regarding imaging a typical user’s gender. Instead of saying “indicate the category of person...”, the preamble could omit general-*man* words like ‘person’ to reduce this people=male bias, or to ask about something completely different that isn’t gender biased at all, and see whether the typical imagined speaker would still be male.

4.4.7 Enregisterment of ‘yeah nah’

Finally, in order to further understand how salient these stereotypes are, especially the extreme gender stereotype, it is useful to look into the literature around stereotypes and schemas, and to tie in a concept called enregisterment.

Stereotypes are inherent in the schema concept (Crocker, Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Schema or scheme is a cognitive framework that helps to organise and interpret information and often allows us to do this quickly in a vast environment. Enregisterment interacts with stereotypes and schemas, and the commodification of ‘yeah nah’ reinforces that link. Johnstone explains this in their study of shirts with Pittsburghese phrases on them. In order to be observable, a variant must be linked with an ideological scheme that can be used to evaluate it in contrast to another variant (2009, p.160). For example, Ochs comments that according to the ideological scheme that women are expected to act differently to men, some features may come to sound gendered (1992). Johnstone goes on to say that the scheme that the hearer uses can link variation with class, correctness, place or any other social framework, each associated with a set of stereotypical personas (p.160).

Some of these linkages between variants and identities can come to be shared via metapragmatic practices (Silverstein, 1993). This pertains to how people indicate to one another what particular forms mean. Form-meaning links can be suggested explicitly in talk about talk, or indirectly by associating forms with social stereotypes (Johnstone, 2009, p.160). Once it comes to be interpreted and evaluated with reference to an ideological scheme, that linguistic form has been “enregistered” (p.160). Thus a form that is enregistered is one that is linked with a way of speaking, or register, associated with a personal or social

identity (p.160). Johnstone explains how thus the set of forms associated with “Pittsburghese”, for example, will be different in the local imagination to that of a linguist (p.160). Johnstone uses Pittsburghese as an example of enregisterment, particularly the more salient features associated with this ‘dialect’, such as the monophthongization of /aw/ shown in words like ‘dahntahn’ or downtown, ‘yinz’, ‘sammich’, and ‘n@t’ which are typically shown on T-shirts that you can buy (2009, p.169-170). Johnstone uses the existence of these t-shirts with Pittsburghese phrases on them as evidence to the fact that Pittsburgh speech has entered this enregistered phase. This happens when these local forms are no longer exclusively linked with class or correctness, as is the case with many slang terms initially, but also with local identity (p.163). Thus at this stage, a local Pittsburgh word or phrase can evoke local pride even among people who don’t identify themselves as speakers of a nonstandard variety or of working-class, for example (p.163). The earlier, (and still exclusively for some people) more stigmatised meanings of local forms could still invoke working-class pride or incorrectness, as things can be enregistered in different ways to different people (p.163). However, this link is now indirect, and is mediated by the link between local forms and authentic localness through this commodification (p.163). Further, Johnstone argues that enregisterment is a precondition for Pittsburghese shirts for two reasons; the first is that the shirts appeal to people who are able to hear Pittsburgh speech as different from other varieties and link Pittsburgh speech not with working-class or incorrect speech as much as with authentic local identity (p.168). Secondly, it is reliant on already-available lists of linguistic forms identified with Pittsburghese, and thus people who buy these shirts have to be familiar with the practice of respelling the words seen on the shirt to make them sound local (for example, a shirt with words like pop, redd up, n@, hans and sammich) (p.168).

Johnstone (2016, p. 633-634) thus describes “enregister” as a verb where A (a linguistic form or some possibly meaningful act) is enregistered with B (a register) by C (an agent) in terms of D (an ideological schema) because of E (an interactional urgent need or demand in which calling attention to the enregisterment of or enregistering one or more forms serves some rhetorical function) and F (a sociohistorical urgent need or demand that gives rise to metapragmatic practices). In sum, Johnstone explains that the process of enregisterment is practically always constrained by what sort of form or action is being linked with what sort of “cultural model of action”, by whom, to whom, how, and by virtue of what ideological, interactional and historical factors (p.641). They go on to say that not every description of a process of enregisterment must describe every aspect of this process, but to avoid the temptation to assume that meanings are more shared and stable than they actually are and that this process is detailed and complex (p.641). One detail that seems to be lacking in the research about enregisterment is how does one know when something is fully enregistered? For example, how can you tell whether something like ‘yeah nah’ is completely, fully enregistered or only partially enregistered, especially considering that it can be enregistered in different ways to different individuals? Is there a scale of enregisterment in which a linguistic variant can be placed on? This process will be explored more below when trying to fit ‘yeah nah’ into the same formula that Pittsburghese had been above.

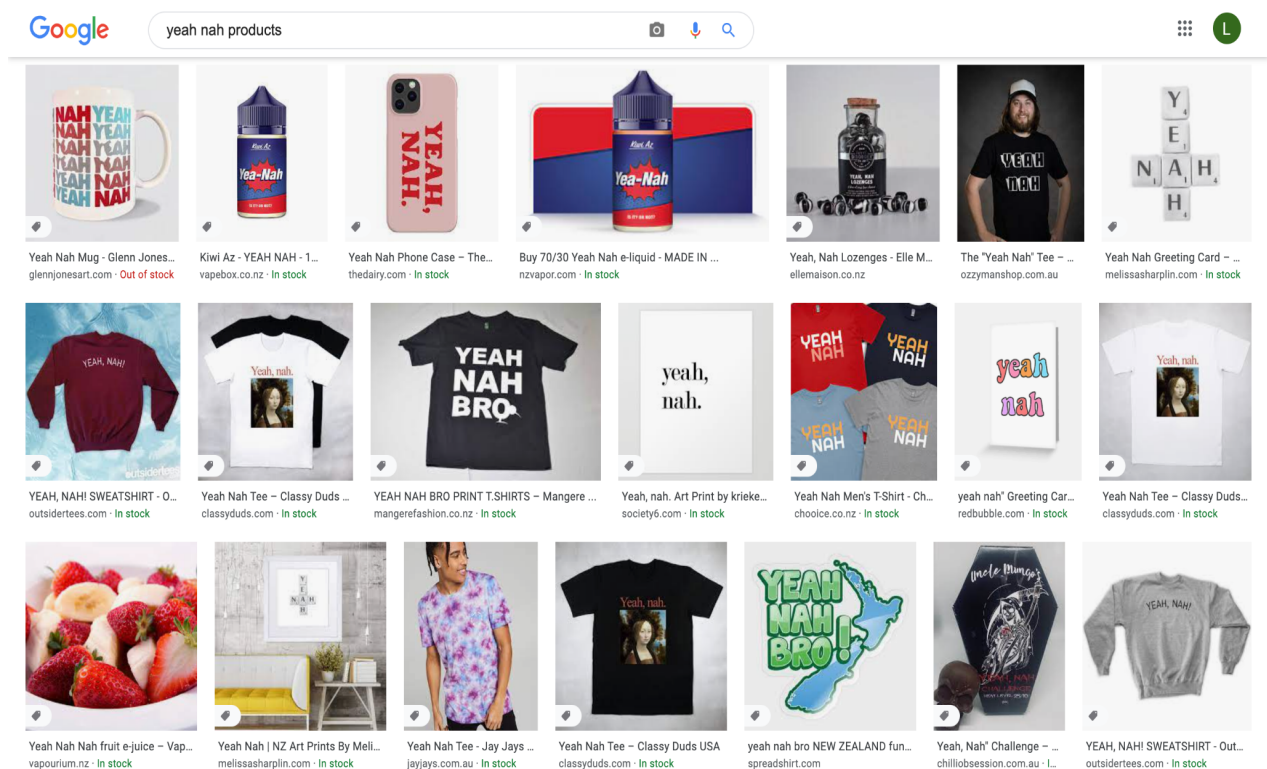
Another example of enregisterment is in Illbury's study of tweets made by white gay men (2020). Illbury analysed 15,804 tweets from ten white gay men from May 2015 and April 2016 (p.246). In doing so, they found features in the tweets that were typically associated with African American Vernacular English (AAVE). The successful reading of the stylisation of AAVE was hingeing on a mutual understanding that the style and persona invoked is inauthentic (p.256). In other words, by using features of AAVE in their tweets, these participants were not trying to present themselves as AAVE speakers but were using selective elements of the variety, such as lexical items like 'ratchet' and 'yaas', as well as phonological features like the orthographic representation of (ING) as [ɪn] (2020, p.256). Illbury suggested that in using these AAVE features in their tweets, the gay participants were eliciting the stereotype and meme, or shared internet joke, of the "sassy Black woman" in order to show themselves as 'fiere' or 'sassy' (p.259). Indeed, the appreciation of being "sassy" is directly referenced in the tweets and was summarised as being appreciated qualities within the gay community (p.259).

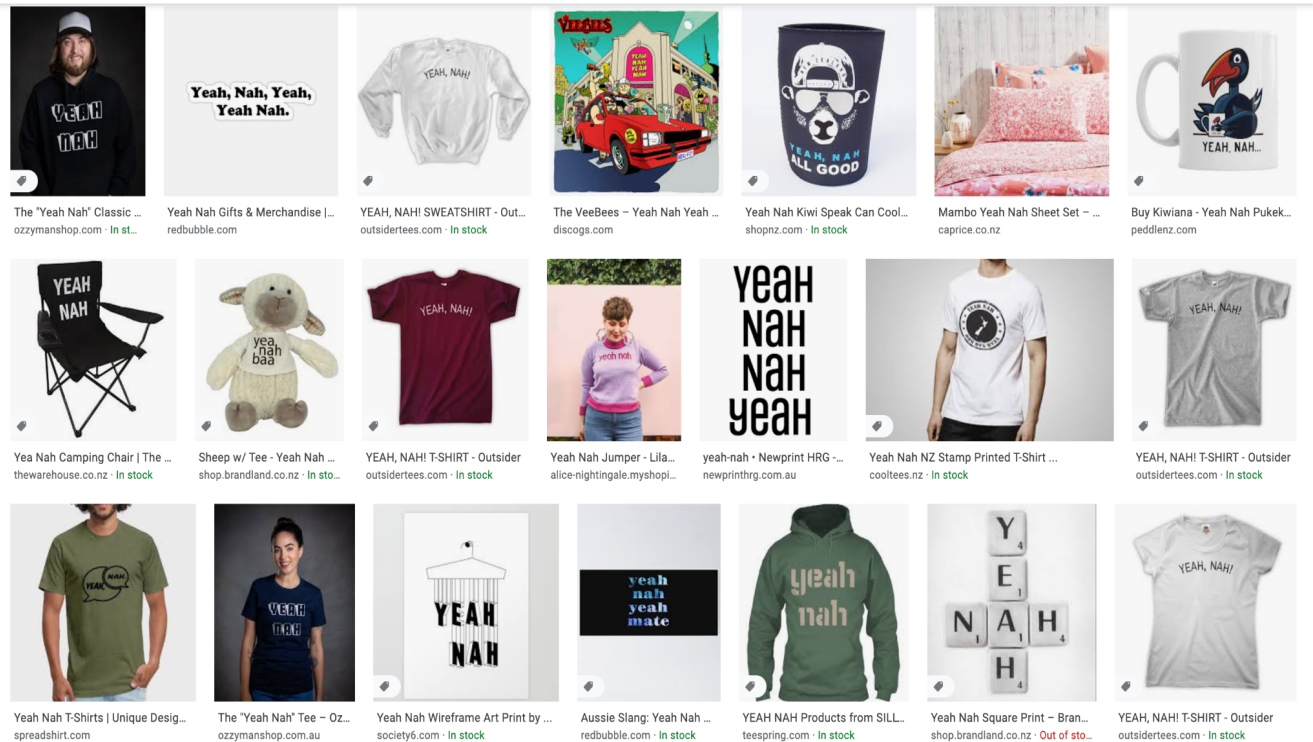
However, it is unclear whether 'yeah no' is enregistered, for example, mainly due to the lack of media attention and wide-spread stereotypes that surround it as 'yeah nah' does. It could index something more salient in Australian English due to how these studies seem to highlight this phrase in this variety specifically. This could be an avenue for future study. In comparison, however, 'yeah nah' can very easily be enregistered in NZE as demonstrating common ground and localness amongst other New Zealanders. In other words, it could be enregistered as a group identity marker by virtue of New Zealanders wishing to create their own identity, separate to their past colonial identity. This is especially apparent in how the media clips and personalities say it is particularly 'kiwi' and just part of the way we talk. This in turn would bring up associations and images of the word 'kiwi', which in turn only brings up male New Zealanders due to the lack of a salient, stereotypical 'kiwi' female. Again, this is reflected in figures like the rural, strong, unemotional, pioneer type featured in Phillips' book *A Man's Country?: the Image of the Pakeha Male*; the Wikipedia entry for the New Zealand stereotypes being male; and personas like Fred Dagg and How to Dad.

Using the formula from Johnstone above (2016, p.633-644), the action being linked here is the use of 'yeah nah' to the register of NZE (A), by New Zealanders 18-25 years old, Pākehā and predominantly female (B). It is thus enregistered as being used by New Zealanders 26-35 years old, strictly male and mostly Pākehā but with some diversity in ethnicity, as 57 of the 122 respondents chose Pākehā only for Imagined Ethnicity (C). How it is enregistered is due to the media's usage of 'yeah nah' and how certain 'stereotypical kiwi' (males) are depicted in the media and how the marker is portrayed as strictly 'kiwi' (D). The ideological factors thus are ones of male stereotypes and kiwi-centric stereotypes, at the exclusion of the image of a stereotypical kiwi female (E and F). Whilst Johnstone claimed that not every description of a process of enregisterment must describe every factor of this process, 'yeah nah' does appear to very easily fit this model.

Additionally, a simple Google Images search was conducted to show the commodification of ‘yeah nah’, demonstrating that, like Pittsburghese, commodification of the discourse marker is directly linked with enregisterment. I searched Google Images for ‘yeah nah’ products’. This was not restricted to New Zealand. The first page returns ‘yeah nah’ printed on t-shirts, phone cases, greeting cards, vape liquid, lozenges, wall art, and beer can coolers, to name a few. This demonstrates the vast range of products that features the phrase and how successfully it has been marketed to target a wide audience.

Figure 17: Search Results in Google Images for “yeah nah products”.





This wide variety of products, especially in the very first, most popular results, also carry a predominantly male stereotype, with male clothing and models as well as products targeted for a stereotypical male audience, such as the beer can cooler, lollies described as 'lozenges' as a gag gift, and vape juice. These items in particular are traditionally marketed to a male audience. The colours in particular of the products across the two pages are darker colours like blues, reds, blacks, greens and whites, which again, are stereotypically and traditionally more 'masculine' colours. This directly plays into the male usage stereotype that was discussed in Section 4.4.4 and shows a more concrete link that indeed, people assume that stereotypical 'kiwis' (men) are far more likely to use the discourse marker and the products associated with it.

We must still show some caution into assuming that these meanings are more shared and stable than they actually are, due to this detailed and complex process (Johnstone 2016, p.641), but the directions of this research seem to suggest that there is indeed a salient enregisterment process that has happened. This is especially in light of how 'yeah nah' is salient in New Zealand in the media, but 'yeah no' isn't. On top of this, 'yeah nah' seems to signify in the media some idea of localness and source of 'kiwi' pride in the way we speak (see Kiwiculture 2019¹⁴ and Newshub 2018¹⁵), but in its products and metalinguistic analysis, it also seems to hold a strong male stereotype that may not be accurate in terms of its actual usage. Just because 'yeah nah' is enregistered, doesn't mean that New Zealanders are

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEJvBfJBaDI>

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VZVyGtY8s0>

purposely invoking a stereotypical male image, as again, real-life usage can be different to linguistic analysis, as supported in folk linguistics studies like that of Boughton (2006) and Kuiper (2005) (as mentioned in Section 3.1).

4.5 Conclusion

In sum, it is clear that New Zealanders see ‘yeah nah’ as distinctly part of NZE and not any other variety of English. They also know New Zealanders who use the discourse marker, further cementing the idea that it has salience and is enregistered in New Zealand as signalling localness and ‘kiwi’ identity. They see it as strictly belonging to their culture and language.

In terms of language stereotypes, participants who reported their own use of ‘yeah nah’ had similar age and ethnicity to their imagined user of ‘yeah nah’. The participants who used ‘yeah nah’ themselves were predominantly 18-25 years old and Pākehā, and their imagined user of the discourse marker was 26-35 years old and also Pākehā but also likely to be Māori. However, the gender of participants who reported their own use of the discourse marker did not match the stereotype that they had about typical ‘yeah nah’ users. Whilst the participants who say they use ‘yeah nah’ were about 60:40 female to male, over 90% of all participants imagined a male using the marker. This mismatch is indeed attributed to the fact that the term is enregistered and presents an image of a stereotypical ‘kiwi’ (bloke). This is also perpetuated by the ‘yeah nah’ products found online, which were largely targeted towards a male audience in the forms of can coolers, vape liquid, lozenges, and male models for t-shirts. Many national stereotypes are male and thus participants are further prompted to think of a male stereotype when thinking of this discourse marker attributed to NZE. Within this gender stereotype, we have the people=man bias. This is where participants tend to attribute male gender to a nondescript, imagined person. This further consolidates this imagined user to be male, not only because of the lack of salient ‘kiwi’ female stereotypes, but also because of this automatic bias.

CHAPTER 5

Qualitative analysis

5.1 Introduction

A qualitative analysis approach was best suited for the results from Part 3 of the Qualtrics survey. This is due to the open question, nominal nature of the answers given in relation to the context of ‘yeah nah’ and how one might use it. This metalinguistic analysis helps to answer the third research question, which pertains to what exactly the discourse marker means in context. As a reminder, the wording of Part 3 of the survey is as follows:

Thinking of this person who is most likely to say “yeah nah”, how might they use it? What kind of conversation would this person be having? In what context would it appear? Can you give examples of it? Please give as much detail as you can. If you’re not sure, just say “I don’t know”.

What is key here, and has been revealed to us in Section 4.4.6 above, is that participants are thinking of a man saying ‘yeah nah’; participants have answered Part 3 according to what it means when a man uses it, and not necessarily what it means when they use it. Again, participants’ ideas about who uses it and how it is actually used are at odds and may not reflect the reality of the discourse marker, as described in folk linguistics studies by Boughton (2006) and Kuiper (2005). This difference means that the participants lean into this male stereotype, and this becomes apparent in the analysis of the responses below.

5.2 Methodology

Rowley’s general steps for qualitative analyses were followed for this part (2014), as well as Creswell and Poth’s approach to qualitative analysis (2018). Specifically, phenomenology was chosen as the best approach to analysing Part 3. This gave me the ability to describe my own personal experiences with ‘yeah nah’, and, as a native speaker of NZE, I believe I could provide some insight into the use of the term. This phenomenology approach also gave me the opportunity to capture both the broad, multi-faceted textural or structural description of how participants perceive ‘yeah nah’, as well as to capture the “essence” of the term and its meaning. Creswell and Poth also outline how phenomenology involves a specific and more structured method. This specific method suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018, p.201) is a simplified version of Moustakas’ (1994), which features a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method.

Narrative, Grounded Theory Study, Ethnography and Case Study methods of analysis weren’t chosen due to the type of data I received. Narrative analysis draws specifically on creating a

story out of the data, locating epiphanies and chronologies within the data which weren't found within my survey. Grounded Theory studies involve only choosing and focusing on one open coding category and how it builds toward the essence of the narrative of the data. This would narrow the focus of my research to the detriment of investigating all themes and codes that contribute to the meaning of 'yeah nah'. Ethnography ultimately reports on how the target culture 'works', which is not the aim of investigating the context of the discourse marker. And finally, case study analysis was not chosen due to the focus on generalisation of what was 'learned' from the data, as well as its tendency to be used in psychological or therapy cases. Similarly, computer use in qualitative analysis was not considered due to its limitations, as it interferes with the analysis by creating distance from the data and hindering creativity and offers limited guidance for analysis (Creswell & Poth, p.209).

A benefit of using phenomenology is that it is also a well-established method and has been used in various studies successfully. Mohajan comments that the use of qualitative research has increased in many institutions in the last few decades, including in the social sciences field (2018, p.23). See also De Chesney's work (2014) on nursing research using phenomenology, Shaw et al. 's work (2016) on life in extra care housing using phenomenological analysis, and finally Pienkos and Sass' work (2017) on the phenomenology of linguistic experience of schizophrenia.

The general guideline of phenomenology is the following: create and organise data files; read through the text making margin notes and forming initial codes (also known as memoing); describe your personal experience through the epoch; develop significant statements and group these into meaning units; and finally develop a textual description (what happened), a structural description (how the phenomenon was experienced) and develop the essence of the phenomenon using a composite description (Cresswell & Poth, p.199).

Below are two examples of the comments from the survey respondents in Part 3:

1. *A casual conversation with friends and the person disagrees with something that is said. They state their disagreement by saying "yeah nah" before elaborating. Or possibly the person has been asked a question by a friend, and replies "yeah nah" to indicate the answer is no, but they're not happy the answer is no.*
2. *"Do you want to come get some drinks?"
"Yeah, nah"*

The yeah is used to soften the blow of saying no.

Or

In a conversation where the person is agreeing with the other, the yeah is an agreement like "I hear you" and then saying nah to continue the conversation e.g.

"I don't like the new Coldplay album it's really weird..."

"Yeah, nah me neither eh"

The yeah is agreeing with what the person has said, and then continuing on with the negative comment

5.2.1 Memoing

Following this phenomenology method, memo notes were made for Part 3 after the first data read through, with emergent ideas and recurring themes highlighted within the comments. For example, 'casual conversation' and 'used with mates' were highlighted as they were repeated many times within the raw results. 'Casual' was mentioned 32 times within the 122 responses, and 'mate' was mentioned 11 times within the responses. 'Mate' is quite a gendered term too, often used in tandem with the image of the stereotypical 'rugged male'. Historically, the term had been used between male industry workers, like diggers and troops in the late eighteenth and early twentieth century, and as such, was typically associated as an exclusive, masculine term, used by males and for males (Wilkes 1985 & 1993). 20 of the 122 participants used 'I don't know' as their response.

5.2.2 Personal experience through epoch

As a native speaker of NZE, personal experience surrounding the discourse marker provides some value to the conversation. Often the conversation around 'yeah nah' includes how it is part of the typical kiwi stereotype. My native speaker intuition would deem 'yeah nah' to be used casually between friends or family members, either sarcastically or as a way to disagree with somebody. Personally, I have only ever heard the discourse marker being used amongst New Zealanders and the meaning of it may be difficult to grasp for tourists or foreign visitors. I personally interact with non-New Zealanders predominantly overseas or online, and use of 'yeah nah' amongst these people would perhaps feel unnatural or I'd try to avoid using it in order to prevent confusion or further questions about its meaning. Use of 'yeah nah' would feel more justified as a joke response to a seemingly ridiculous or contextually-obvious negative suggestion amongst my other NZ native friends. An intonation difference here would be key, where a falling intonation pattern would be used. That is to say, 'nah' would have a lower and flatter pitch than the 'yeah' in order to pretend I'm saying yes, but 'sneak in' a 'nah' at the end.

I feel like it would also be justified as a response to asking if I wanted some more coffee, for example, and I would say "yeah nah, I'm good thanks", or something similar, probably in order to 'save-face' and soften the blow of saying no. My own imagined, typical user of 'yeah nah' would be a male, probably in his thirties to forties, Pākehā, Māori or Pasifika equally. Indeed, this image exactly matches what the survey respondents indicated in Chapter 4. I would imagine they live in a rural area, maybe even on a farm but could also equally

work in construction as a tradesman. This also mirrors my visualised stereotype of a stereotypical ‘kiwi bloke’, most notably wearing a singlet top, shorts, jandals or gumboots and a bucket hat specifically. These images probably come from the stereotypical ‘kiwi’ persona created by John Clarke, called Fred Dagg. Whilst this was originally a persona created by Clarke, it has since become a kiwi icon (see Kilgallon et al., 2017¹⁶). This framework also might be similar to how participants answered in Part 3 of the survey, where they imagined a typical ‘kiwi’ using ‘yeah nah’ in context.

5.2.3 Developing significant statements and horizontalization of data

Using the highlighted terms, a list was made of emergent ideas which aimed to avoid overlap but still captured all aspects of ‘yeah nah’ that were mentioned. Recurrences of the same idea were grouped together. There were 65 terms within this list. An interpretive view was used to reduce and group these terms within overarching units of information. The same underlying meanings were grouped into these following units:

- Humorous conversation
- Casual conversation
- Contemplation
- Politeness
- Hedge
- When making plans or answering a short question
- Agreeing
- Changing their mind
- Disagreeing
- Male-centric context
- A ‘kiwi’ context
- Unplanned contexts
- Changes in intonation
- Challenging expectations
- Engagement in conversation
- Pragmatic use

In accordance with phenomenology, these units of information were further broken down into the following codes:

- Type of conversation
- Meaning conveyed
- Stereotypes

¹⁶

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/91400934/john-clarke-the-man-behind-new-zealand-cultural-icon-fred-dagg-has-died>

- How it's said

These codes will therefore be used to describe the essence and ultimately describe the perceived context of 'yeah nah'.

5.3 Results: essence of phenomenon

The analysis revealed that, as experienced by the participants, the context of 'yeah nah' is distinctly split into the following essential categories: types of conversation being had (casual and joking), the meaning conveyed by its usage (politeness, engagement, contemplation, and levels of agreement), the stereotypes that emerge (male-centric and kiwi-centric), and how it's said (intonation, pragmatic and unplanned use). Each code will be discussed in turn.

5.4 Discussion

Each code will be discussed and linked to aforementioned literature with the idea of answering research question number 3 in mind; what context does 'yeah nah' appear in and what does it mean?

5.4.1 Type of conversation

Participants often stated that 'yeah nah' would most likely appear in casual conversation. This was further broken down into "*maybe having a laugh with a few mates*", often with similar-aged peers or family members, but not usually "*across generations*". One person described it as being used between males and females alike, which differs from the qualitative results, but will be further debated in the gender stereotype presented in Section 5.4.3. 'Yeah nah' was described as being used to "[*take*] the mick]" out of somebody, which can also have some male connotations or stereotypes associated with it. There are other forms of this phrase, like taking the 'Mick', 'Mickey' or 'Michael', according to Martin from Phrase Finder. According to their website, the most generally accepted origins of this phrase comes from Cockney rhyming slang for 'taking the piss', which referred to a character called Mickey Bliss, which then became 'taking the Mickey'. Not only do the supposed origins of this term carry a more male connotation, but its use does as well; often it's seen as 'banter between lads', as evidenced by Mcalpine who said that the term can be seen on Top Gear, where "three blokes who clearly have a lot of affection for another, each one playfully behaving as if the others are buffoons" (2015).

Another participant in the survey further commented that 'yeah nah' was used to egg somebody on or even pretend that they are going to say yes but actually say and mean no. Within this humorous context, we also see the term being described as a way to imitate peers, "*as a way of identifying with a person or group*". This idea shows a link between an informal

setting of conversation and the people with whom one might use or hear ‘yeah nah’. Participants mention the idea of identity, not strictly as a New Zealander, but as a way of recognising and belonging to a social group.

5.4.2 Meaning conveyed

There were numerous meanings thought to be conveyed for ‘yeah nah’ within the responses. One of these was politeness; often this was regarded as *“respectfully disagreeing”* or wanting to correct somebody. One participant even mentioned that it *“can replace ‘No thanks.’ in most contexts”*. The answer to the question may be no, but *“they’re not happy the answer is no”* and wish to soften the blow of it. One participant labelled this as an *“NZ desire to be polite all the time instead of honest”*. This creates a link between so-called ‘saving face’ and the New Zealander identity. This stereotype will be explored in more detail later.

Another meaning conveyed was a sense of acknowledging what had been said. This was described by one participant as *“the yeah is an agreement like ‘I hear you’ and then saying nah to continue the conversation”*. It was also described as demonstrating engagement whilst talking to somebody, as a *“minimal encourager”*. In this usage, ‘yeah nah’ is used to convey a certain level of conversational etiquette.

Another strategy is to demonstrate contemplation, intentionally or otherwise. It can be used to show that the person is considering the aforementioned idea, and then ultimately deciding against or for it. This can be interpreted as another conversational strategy to show a level of etiquette or politeness; that one is thinking and processing a previous question and then making their decision. Within this meaning, participants also mentioned ‘yeah nah’ being used as a filler or pause, *“such as in recounting events or [a] story”*. This can be seen as giving the speaker more time to think about their answer before giving their response. Another participant commented that it can be *“used a little like um or ah, but when a[n] affirmative or negative response is required”*, meaning that it can operate as a filler but still requires the speaker to expand on what is said. One person interpreted this as *“yeaaaa... is a filler. So it is just a “Nah”.*” This demonstrates how some participants viewed the separate words within the discourse marker as contributing to the whole filler meaning. Hedge is another linguistic term given to many of the responses. ‘Yeah nah’ was often seen by participants as demonstrating hesitance and *“conveys a moment of indecisiveness regarding the possibility that is being discussed”*. One person even mentioned that it can show somebody as being a bit *“non-committal”*, even meaning that somebody feels neutral about a topic or is ambivalent. *“Not fully agreeing”* was mentioned numerous times too. This shows that the discourse marker can encapsulate many different meanings within this hedge function.

In looking at levels of agreement within this code, the term could show agreement. This was determined as *“confirming information asked”* or agreeing with the previous speaker. One participant even mentioned it as meaning *“someone wants to say yes but is a bit*

self-conscious about sounding too enthusiastic". This adds further evidence to the term being used to determine conversational etiquette, something that New Zealanders appear to value highly. Many participants also interpreted 'yeah nah' to mean that a person has changed their mind, likely *"initially/instinctively agreed with the idea (yeah) but as they complete their thought they rescind their agreement (nah)"*. This highlights the need to expand on or contradict what has been said, but also shows how the person has changed their mind about the topic. Intonation could also distinguish between some of these meanings, which wasn't entirely explicitly mentioned by participants, but will also be explored in Section 5.4.4.

Lastly, another addition to this code is challenging expectations. The use of 'yeah nah' here is considered as again contradicting what somebody has said, but with the idea that the first speaker *"had some (if possibly slight) expectation that the answer could be affirmative"*. Similarly, one participant mentioned that the use of the term meant *"when someone floats an idea which on the surface sounds good, but the person does not want to cooperate"*. These instances are similar to the 'shutdown' function in Bower's work (2018, p.30) in their Twitter corpora for Yes, No. Finally of course, is the idea of disagreeing with somebody within this 'levels of agreement' function. Multiple participants explicitly mentioned that *"yeah nah is used to disagree with something"*, for example.

This range of meanings and the breadth of them isn't unusual for discourse markers. For example, Bower found 16 different categories for Yes, No in the COCA corpus, ranging from agreement to understanding, and even within the same marker, the Yes, No Twitter analysis featured 11 varying functions or meanings (2018, p.30). In Chesire et al.'s analysis of *this is + speaker*, for example, there was a high proportion of non-quotative functions by the younger age group, used for somebody's feelings, gestures, states and expressions additionally to the functions used by the older age groups (2011, p.174). Tagliamonte also mentioned some categories of *so*, *like* and *just*, such as pause fillers, hedges, highlighting or focus devices as well as indicators of vagueness (2005, p.1897), which shares many similarities again to some of the 'yeah nah' functions. Schiffrin also commented that discourse markers were similar to contextualisation cues and thus their usage is multifunctional, as they combine many simultaneous processes in constructing discourse, creating coherence and comprehensibility (Schiffrin, 2003, p.58; Schiffrin, 1987b). This further cements 'yeah nah' as a complex, multifunctional discourse marker.

5.4.3 Stereotypes

The male-centric and kiwi-centric stereotypes were mentioned in the responses to Part 3 of the survey, further adding evidence to the gender stereotype that surrounds 'yeah nah'

The male-centric stereotype involves some contradicting statements, but largely focuses on the use of the term by males. One participant mentioned that it was used in conversation *"usually with other males either at work or at business meetings. He owns a building company"*. Another participant highlighted how they imagined it being said *"by a middle*

aged man, most likely towards other men". Echoing this, one participant responded that it *"might be used in work contexts if working class or lower middle class, eg tradies"*. Tradies, or tradesmen, are traditionally and stereotypically male in New Zealand and thus another stereotype emerges about who exactly is likely to use the term. This focus involving social class is interesting, but justifies that people often have a specific type of person in mind when they think of who exactly uses 'yeah nah' and what their traits would be. Another participant mentioned how their brother says it *"after almost every utterance"*, which demonstrates evidently how 'yeah nah' is a salient discourse marker and is still in current use but perhaps they are exaggerating their brother's usage of 'yeah nah' too. What this means for the enregisterment of 'yeah nah' is that it further signals a 'kiwi' male stereotype, which may be because the typical 'kiwi' persona is typically male, as outlined in Section 4.4.

The kiwi-centric stereotype focuses on not only NZE typical phrases in conjunction with the term, but also on who is likely to use the term. Firstly, participants mentioned that the term would be used *"with another person in [New Zealand] where their common language is English"*. Many participants also gave examples of 'yeah nah' being used, often including terms such as *"mate"*, *"for sure"*, *"to be fair"*, and *"eh"*. These are very prevalent within New Zealand and NZE alike, often contributing to the image of a stereotypical 'kiwi' (bloke), drawing on images such as that of Fred Dagg for example. As already mentioned, 'mate' has a concrete gender stereotype associated with it, but 'eh' does too; Meyerhoff noted that 'eh' is a highly stigmatised marker but is used noticeably more by Māori men than by Māori women or Pākehā, and is often used to parody Māori men or even suburban Pākehā women (1994, p.367-368).

Another participant directly made the connection between 'yeah nah' and 'nek minnit' as a kiwi-ism, referring to a meme or internet joke. This meme went viral on YouTube and featured a Pākehā male New Zealander giving an interview, coining the term 'nek minnit' and cementing it as a popular phrase in around 2011 (see AxstaBludsta, 2011)¹⁷. Indeed, by coining it as a kiwi-ism, one is further cementing this male stereotype. 'Yeah nah' was also given as a response to an example question *"should we get some more fish and chips?"*. This also relies heavily on the New Zealand stereotype. Fish and chips are often the subject of a linguistic stereotype, most notably imitating the NZE accent by saying 'fush and chups'. Interestingly, one participant makes a direct link between 'yeah nah' and the media coverage of it. They said that it was *"more commonly used several years ago, at least in my circle. But people like the Kiwi youtuber 'how to dad' still use this phrase frequently. So I am sure it is still popular amongst some people"*. How to Dad is a recognised New Zealand YouTuber, known for comedy style videos about being a dad and about living in New Zealand, such as 'How to understand New Zealand slang'¹⁸ (How to DAD, 2018). This participant had this YouTuber in mind when answering this question, and thus drew on this person as their stereotype for a typical user of 'yeah nah'. Indeed, these images of the 'Nek Minnit guy',

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTZyorJVeql>

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRxFm70nOrY&t=295s>

How to Dad and Fred Dagg are all of men and cement themselves as being ‘stereotypical kiwi blokes’. This directly reflects Agha’s comments that enregistered linguistic features can become correlated with socially distinct, characterological figures (2003, p.242). Agha defined these personifications of the imagined typical users, linked to factors like social class and other aesthetic qualities (2003, p.243). This adds evidence to the fact that it has become enregistered and can signal not only localness with the New Zealander identity, but also of a male stereotype associated with its use. One participant further echoed this point by saying that the use of ‘yeah nah’ is like *“projecting an identity of being an ‘ordinary bloke’ or a laid back attitude”*, excluding the idea of an ordinary ‘kiwi’ female.

In direct contrast, another person mentioned that they had never actually heard somebody saying it in real conversation, perhaps also reflecting a disconnect in reality and how they perceive ‘yeah nah’ users.

5.4.4 How it’s said

This ‘how it’s said’ code includes the manner in which the marker is said. This includes intonation or vowel length, pragmatic use and unplanned use of ‘yeah nah’. Firstly, the intonation of ‘yeah nah’ was mentioned within the examples given by respondents. One person wrote *“yeah-nahh”*, highlighting a drawn-out vowel for ‘nah’ or perhaps a change in pitch. In terms of what this is signalling, it could perhaps show sarcasm or feature in a joking type of conversation. This same respondent elaborated, saying it was used *“more in a joke-like manner though. For example, if I asked [t]his person (my boss), whether there was much money in the account.. he might say “yeah-nahh”..”*. Other respondents used an ellipses or comma between ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’, which could also reflect a humorous extended pause between the words, perhaps in challenging expectations of the first speaker in a humorous way. Again, changes in intonation could distinguish meaning in different contexts as well, which wasn’t mentioned by participants but my native speaker intuition suggests this may be the case. Changes in intonation and tone may also provide cohesion within ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’, distinguishing it as a joined phrase. A simple ‘yeah’ or ‘nah’ may not do in these instances, and thus by joining the two together with some pattern of intonation, one is able to achieve the desired effect and meaning that the discourse marker carries. Too much of a pause between the two words, or even ‘unusual’ intonation patterns across the phrase may turn it from a two-word phrase into just two separate words.

In terms of its pragmatic use, ‘yeah nah’ was mentioned as being used at the beginning of their sentence, and signals the end of an exchange, almost like a full stop. One participant commented that it was *“used to change topic after a gap in the conversation”*, again mirroring the ‘topic shift’ function of Yes, No in Bower’s Twitter corpora (2018, p.30) and demonstrating a level of cohesion by using the term.

Finally, another idea mentioned was that ‘yeah nah’ could be an unplanned utterance. They mentioned it was used “*just in every situation... You don’t plan slang, it happens even if it doesn’t make sense to non kiwis*”. This highlights how its usage could be under the level of consciousness for some New Zealanders. Another participant added evidence to this by highlighting how it would be used for “*passive/subconscious thoughts, definitely not actively thought upon in the moment*”. Whilst this may be true in its everyday usage, ‘yeah nah’ is salient enough to be recognised as belonging to the New Zealand culture and identity.

5.5 Conclusion

Metalinguistic commentary was used to analyse the context of ‘yeah nah’ and its varied meanings according to participants, drawing on several stereotypes and various speaker attitudes within New Zealand. This helps to answer the third research question, or what kind of context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in and therefore, what does it mean? Firstly, people perceive it to most likely appear in casual and humorous types of conversation. According to the participants, it carries a wide variety of meanings, conveying politeness, engagement, contemplation and hedge, as well as various levels of agreement. Often the stereotype mentioned by respondents was one of kiwi-centrism and thus masculinity, drawing on images of ‘the typical kiwi bloke’. How the discourse marker is said is also of key importance; participants mentioned intonation, pragmatic and unplanned usage providing salient context clues of its different meaning within a given conversation.

One final point to consider here is that as this is metalinguistic commentary, we should be careful to assume that these labels and comments are correct. In other words, participants’ thoughts and attitudes towards the term and its users may not reflect correct, in-context usage. This is something to keep in mind when observing real-life instances of ‘yeah nah’ and how well these functions map onto them.

CHAPTER 6

Corpora Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters explored speaker's perceptions of 'yeah nah'; in this chapter, I will explore instances of 'yeah nah' in use in spoken corpora of NZE.

The Quake Studies corpus (Walsh et al, 2013) contains nearly 100 hours of stories from residents in New Zealand who wished to tell their stories primarily from the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch Earthquakes. It contains 658 transcripts and 1,179,745 word tokens. This corpus was selected for its recency within the last ten or so years. 'Yeah nah' as a discourse marker may be more salient within recent years, as evidenced by some participants' comments saying it's used "*more commonly used several years ago, at least in my circle. But people like the Kiwi youtuber 'how to dad' still use this phrase frequently. So I am sure it is still popular amongst some people*", or how one participants' brother says it "*after almost every utterance*". Indeed, 'yeah nah' is currently on an upwards trajectory for Google searches, as mentioned in Section 2.3. Thus recent transcripts are important for analysing this term. One disadvantage for using this particular corpus is that all transcripts are monologues. Discourse markers by nature tend to appear more commonly in natural, casual conversations between two or more people, such as in the recordings analysed by Tagliamonte for the study of *just*, *like* and *so* (2005), as well as of Cheshire et al. of *this is + speaker* (2011).

MAONZE (or Māori Origins of New Zealand English) is a corpus containing an archive of English recordings from Māori speakers born from the late 19th century through to modern speakers of Māori today (King et al. , 2011). There are over 1,870 transcripts and 1,103,510 word tokens from spoken English conversation from Māori participants. The MAONZE Corpus also contains two related corpora within it, that of the Tuhoe corpus and the ME (Māori English) corpus. The ME corpus comprises 20 interviews conducted in Christchurch and South Auckland in the early 2000s, mainly of young male Māori who aren't necessarily speakers of te reo Māori. This corpus was chosen because of the recency of the majority of the recordings.

The ONZE corpus contains New Zealand English speakers, the earliest born in 1851 and spans to recordings made from 1994 onwards of university-aged students (Gordon, MacLagan & Hay, 2007). This larger database also contains 4,507 transcripts and 3,398,806 word tokens from ONZE. This corpus was chosen as it is one of the biggest corpora for spoken NZE.

6.2 Method

All three corpora are integrated with the software LaBB-CAT, and are hosted by the University of Canterbury. A layered search was completed across all corpora, searching specifically on the orthographic tier for ‘yeah’ followed immediately by ‘nah’. It is possible that other variations of spelling for ‘yeah’ or ‘nah’ could be coded within the corpus (for instance, yea without an ‘h’ at the end), but for the simplicity of the search, I decided to just stick to the more standard spelling of ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’. This choice was also in response to the majority of cases in the media using the present spelling of ‘yeah nah’ (see Health Promotion Agency, 2013¹⁹; KiwiCulture, 2019²⁰; Nothingaddsup, 2019²¹; 7 Days NZ, 2018²²).

The option for ‘10 words before and after match’ was also selected, in order to provide sufficient context around the discourse marker for ease of analysis. A CSV file was then extracted from these results. The vast majority of the MAONZE examples of ‘yeah nah’ did not have the matching audio from the transcripts, so this was not an aspect that was included in the MAONZE analysis process. The audio for Quake Box and ONZE was also used. However, all transcripts were available for all examples of ‘yeah nah’ and these were all consulted too.

According to the MAONZE digital transcription guide (p.6), any examples in any of the corpora which featured one or two of the words within angled brackets were removed as they were very small feedback responses from the other speaker. Examples which featured, for example, “yeah - nah” or “yeah -- nah” were also removed, as dashes signify hesitation, and two dashes signify a long hesitation. This was to ensure that ‘yeah nah’ was intended as a whole discourse marker and not as its separate components. A full stop between the two words was kept in the analysed examples, as the full stop only signifies a very short hesitation, which could indeed mean that the speaker used a small pause or change in intonation, which was acceptable for the usage of ‘yeah nah’ according to participants in Chapter 5.4.4.

4 results were found when ‘yeah nah’ was used as a search item in the LaBB-CAT Quake Studies corpus (Walsh et al., 2013). Of these 4 examples, however, only 2 results remained after the data tidying process in line with the transcription guide. This results in a normalised ‘yeah nah’ word rate of 1.70 (2dp) per million words within the corpus. Breaking this down even further, the Quake Studies corpus contains 194 males with a total word count of 24,810 and 295 females with a total word count of 19,089. Thus by using these 2 examples of ‘yeah

¹⁹<https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/documents/Say%20Yeah%20Nah%20media%20release.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEJvBfJBaDI>

²¹https://www.reddit.com/r/newzealand/comments/agqc14/why_has_aus_suddenly_started_pissing_yeah_nah_off/

²² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5QahPwD8_8

nah', one from a female and the other by a male, males had a normalised 'yeah nah' word frequency of 40.30 (2dp) per million words, and 52.39 (2dp) for women.

Of the 101 MAONZE examples shown on the database, only 82 examples remained after data tidying in line with the transcription guide. Not all examples featured the gender of the speaker, but the majority of the examples did. Of the ones that did include it however, the average gender was male. Of these 82 examples, 18 were from the interviewers themselves, as opposed to the other speakers in the database. Using the tidied data, this results in a normalised 'yeah nah' word frequency of 74.31 (2dp) per million words within the corpus. The MAONZE corpus also features 96 males and 73 females, with a male total word count at 69,195 and a female total word count at 127,536. 'Yeah nah' was used 54 times by males, and 9 times by females. This results in a normalised word frequency of 'yeah nah' at 780.40 (2dp) per million words for males and 70.57 (2dp) for females.

ONZE contained 34 examples of 'yeah nah', with the average gender being male. However, not all examples listed the gender of the speaker. 26 examples remained after data tidying. This results in a normalised 'yeah nah' word rate of 10.00 (2dp) per million words within the corpus. Breaking this down even further, the ONZE corpus features 346 males and 320 females, with a male total word count at 215,480 and a female total word count at 164,254. With 16 examples of 'yeah nah' elicited by males and 9 from females, this results in a normalised word frequency of 'yeah nah' at 74.25 (2dp) per million words for males and 54.79 (2dp) for females.

6.2.1 Coding Scheme

In order to look at the various corpora and the examples of 'yeah nah', it is important to establish a coding scheme in which one can apply functions to each example. These codes are based on the functions and meanings of 'yeah nah' as determined by the participants in the survey in Part 3. This of course is reliant on the stereotypes and attitudes of the respondents, which may not accurately map onto real-life examples of 'yeah nah'. This will be something to consider in the coding process and how well these functions fit.

In light of these restrictions and the nature of the transcripts, I coded each example according to all the possible 'meanings conveyed' from the functions from Chapter 5. This meant that I could choose from politeness, engagement, contemplation, and levels of agreement (agreeing, changed their mind, challenging expectations, disagreeing) for all of the examples that featured 'yeah nah'.

From the labels in Chapter 5, a coding scheme was created for all corpora, as shown in Table 7 below. The examples featured were taken from the MAONZE corpus due to the abundance of examples. More often than not, these examples also featured multiple functions at once.

Table 7: Functions attributed to examples of 'yeah nah' in the spoken corpora.

Function label and my explanation	Examples
<p><u>Politeness</u> The speaker wished to face-save, or soften the blow of a 'no' or disagreement, or even showing general politeness towards the other speaker.</p> <p>Here, the interviewer wishes to express that the discount is still pretty good, despite what ME11 said. In other words, they're being polite about saying no or disagreeing.</p>	<p>Transcript #4</p> <p>ME11: she doesn't get it for half price she only gets . what . the price</p> <p>Interviewer ME11: retail <unclear yeah></p> <p>ME11: only a little discount so</p> <p>Interviewer ME11: yeah nah that's . still pretty good though aye <mmm></p>
<p><u>Engagement</u> Attributed when 'yeah nah' was used as a conversational encourager for the other speaker, or recognising what the previous speaker said and subsequently adding their own opinion.</p> <p>Here, the interviewer recognised what the other person had said with Coral's name, further adding that they worked at the Press.</p>	<p>Transcript #9</p> <p>ME13: yeah Carol</p> <p>Interviewer ME13: Carol Coral</p> <p>ME13: Coral <coral< Coral</p> <p>Interviewer ME13: yeah nah he he he works at the press</p>
<p><u>Contemplation</u> Contemplation was attributed to the examples when it was clear that the speaker was using 'yeah nah' to provide thinking time, or was used intentionally as a hedge.</p> <p>Here, the interviewer is contemplating what ME15 has said about embracing Māori language and culture, and adds their own opinion after considering it.</p>	<p>Transcript #13</p> <p>ME15: pushing their own boundaries we gotta translate this song we gotta you know get some expression for our language . and ah . just amongst themselves talking Maori instead a European . <like> oh English I mean</p> <p>Interviewer ME15: yeah nah that's cool</p>
<p><u>Levels of agreement</u> Some type of agreement or disagreement happening.</p> <p>Here, the interviewer is either agreeing or disagreeing with ME17 about whether it's true that this player will be playing for the</p>	<p>Transcript #14</p> <p>Interviewer ME17: <i>laughs</i> good rugby player</p> <p>ME17: yeah oh yeah I don't think he'll be playing for the . Crusaders though</p>

<p>Crusaders. They turn it into a question instead about how this player actually got a contract to play for them instead.</p>	<p>Interviewer ME17: yeah nah but he they did give him a contract aye?</p>
<p><u>Agreeing</u></p> <p><i>Here, the interviewer is agreeing that the experience will be good for this person in 'moving on up'.</i></p>	<p>Transcript #23</p> <p>ME20: I think so <[unclear]> but that that's what it is . it's just a little bit more experience <yeah> but he'll be good</p> <p>Interviewer ME20: yeah nah just keep moving on up 'n</p>
<p><u>Changed their mind</u></p> <p><i>Here, ME02 has changed their mind with what they were saying, especially when the interviewer asks where this conversation or utterance is going. ME02 continues with the topic but changes their mind about how they approach it.</i></p>	<p>Transcript #33</p> <p>ME02: jumped in his car? we get down the road about? for I don't know half a k sorta thing? and then he starts kinda getting a bit weird on me? going oh like oh ha [unclear]</p> <p>Interviewer ME02: /where's this/ where's this going eddie?</p> <p>ME02: yeah nah oh nah wel weird like he's like oh what are you up to this year and I's like oh well</p>
<p><u>Challenging expectations</u> <u>Shutdown function.</u></p> <p><i>Here, TN is re-enacting or pretending that they're talking to the person who wears these clothes in question, shutting them down by refusing to have their clothes back.</i></p>	<p>Transcript #101</p> <p>L1Y01E: mm yeah [laugh]</p> <p>TN: can tell which ones are his clothes they all smell the same oh yeah nah I don't want to have your clothes back -shoot</p>
<p><u>Disagreeing</u></p> <p><i>Here, the interviewer is likely disagreeing with what ME17 said, saying that this person might actually get to play for the Crusaders because he was given a contract for them.</i></p>	<p>Transcript #14</p> <p>Interviewer ME17: <i>laughs</i> good rugby player</p> <p>ME17: yeah oh yeah I don't think he'll be playing for the . Crusaders though</p>

	Interviewer ME17: yeah nah but he they did give him a contract aye?
<p>Pragmatic</p> <p>Here, ME02 uses ‘yeah nah’ within their own story to topic-shift or topic-focus. In particular, they’re summarising what they’ve said previously by topic-shifting and providing cohesion to their own story.</p>	<p>Transcript #31</p> <p>Interviewer ME02: /if/ only she could see you now aye?</p> <p>ME02: oh yeah maybe who knows bro? but um yeah nah bro I think everything works out? you know for the best in the end?</p>

Politeness was attributed when it was clear that the speaker wished to face-save, or soften the blow of a ‘no’ or disagreement, or even showing general politeness towards the other speaker. Engagement was attributed when ‘yeah nah’ was used as a conversational encourager for the other speaker, or recognising what the previous speaker said and subsequently adding their own opinion. Contemplation was attributed to the examples when it was clear that the speaker was using ‘yeah nah’ to provide thinking time, or was used intentionally as a hedge. Levels of agreement was used when it was clear there was some type of agreement or disagreement happening. Within this overarching term, agreeing was used when it was clear the speaker was agreeing with the previous speaker in some way. Changed their mind was used when the speaker was showing some change in opinion in some way. Similarly, challenging expectations was used when the speaker was using ‘yeah nah’ in a humorous shut-down function or even to intentionally make the other speaker think they’re agreeing, but ultimately disagree explicitly with the speaker. Finally, disagreeing was a term used when the speaker could be seen to disagree with the previous person’s opinion in some way. There were a few instances where it wasn’t entirely clear whether the speaker was agreeing or disagreeing with the previous speaker. In this case I listed both underlying labels, but the overarching ‘levels of agreement’ function still applies.

It was very clear from the analysis process that nearly all examples also had more of a pragmatic use, which was captured in the ‘how it’s said’ theme emerging from Chapter 5. More specifically, nearly all of these examples had a cohesive factor within the speaker’s own topic or utterance, often providing the function of topic shifting or guiding the speaker(s) to a new or old topic or idea. Cohesion is an inherent factor to discourse markers, as commented by Schourup (2011, p.2110), but it was still worth investigating this pragmatic label across the corpora examples.

I referred back to the various labels and detailed meanings from Section 5.4.2 in particular if I had any struggle in differentiating the labels themselves, as they do have some overlap. The individual examples were also multifaceted in that nearly all of them demonstrated more than one function at a time. This is also an inherent factor to discourse markers, as demonstrated by Schiffrin et. al (2003, p.58; 1987b). Within the CSV file, each example was matched progressively with the aforementioned meaning functions whilst consulting the entire transcript, and any examples that were of particular interest were highlighted for further discussion. The Te CSV file of results did not always contain utterances in the ‘before match’ column, often because the turn featuring ‘yeah nah’ was at the start of the speaker’s turn.

6.3 Results

The results for each corpus will be presented below, first with the Quake Studies Corpus, followed by the MAONZE corpus, and then finally ONZE.

6.3.1 Quake Studies Corpus

Due to the low number of final examples of ‘yeah nah’, both examples are listed below:

1. *wee funny one there . but yeah nah like um- we moved anyway*
2. *and I was just like yeah nah all goods and then ahh*

The first instance was by a male and the second by a female. The first instance had a rise in pitch in ‘yeah’ and the ‘nah’ also had a rise in pitch. The ‘nah’ was also said reasonably closely behind the ‘yeah’, meaning that there was no extended pause between the two words. In other words, there was no sense of hedge or hesitation within the phrase. Here, the function seems to reflect that of pragmatic use, or topic shifting, similar to one of Bower’s categories in the Yes, No Twitter corpus (2018, p.30). Within the categories analysed in the survey, it seems to convey the meaning of contemplation. It can be seen as a filler or pause, exactly like how one participant described it “*such as in recounting events or [a] story*”. Within this example, it highlights how the speaker was likely using this filler to think about the next topic and how they wanted to address it.

The last example from this corpus is being used as another filler, conveying a very casual type of conversation, especially in conjunction with ‘all goods’, a phrase that appears commonly in NZE. The contemplation function here is similar to that of ‘um’ or ‘uh’, where other discourse markers can operate as fillers, focus devices or vagueness markers, such as *so*, *like* or *just* from Tagliamonte’s study (2005, p.1897). One such participant in the survey commented that it can be “*used a little like um or ah*”, but stipulated that it occurred when an affirmative or negative response is required. Neither were required in this monologue in the corpus, again highlighting the complexity and multi-faceted nature of this discourse marker. The second example can also fit into the ‘levels of agreement’ category, as an agreement to saying that something is all good or no problem.

In sum, both examples highlight a pragmatic and contemplation function, as well as levels of agreement (agreeing) for the second example.

Interestingly, neither kiwi or male stereotypes were invoked or acted out in the corpus examples, although this may not be a surprise. A joking or humorous conversation was not explicitly being held in regards to these instances. The image of a ‘typical kiwi bloke’ was not being drawn upon or acted out from the speakers either. Again, these are stereotypes and often they do not reflect the reality of its usage in daily conversation. Stereotypes can typically emerge from discourse markers in face-to-face interaction typically by using indexical links. This is exemplified by Snell’s study into the marker *howay* and its usage, particularly in the media, being linked to the North-East, Geordie dialect and working-class culture (2017). Snell argues that *howay*, similar in meaning to ‘come on’, is an enregistered emblem of North-East working class identity as it’s widely recognised as marking a particular social character or persona (p.4). Snell conducted ethnographic field-work in two primary schools in Teesside, resulting in 50 hours of microphone recordings (about 25 hours from each school), collected when ten students from each school wore the microphone for half a day (p.14-15). Many of the students’ interactions reinterpreted what it meant to be working class in the North-East, mainly using *howay* in outdoor games relating to social and moral order in their appeal to play fairly in taking corrective action (p.22). Some more general sense of solidarity in some of the examples attached to *howay* was also derived from the association with working-class culture, in particular the idea of camaraderie (p.22). In this Quake Studies corpus study of ‘yeah nah’, however, this level of indexing to the ‘kiwi’ or gender stereotype was not found.

6.3.2 MAONZE Corpus

As mentioned above, the 82 examples from MAONZE were given functions and are presented below. It is worth remembering that the levels of agreement label is an umbrella term for agreeing, disagreeing, challenging expectations and changed their mind. Many of the examples served multiple functions at the same time and could not be contained to just one function.

Table 8: Total functions attributed to ‘yeah nah’ utterances from the MAONZE corpus, based on ‘before match’ and/or ‘after match’ contexts.

Label given	Number attributed	Percentage of total examples (82) analysed (1dp)
Levels of agreement	<u>41</u>	50%
<i>Agreeing</i>	29	35%
<i>Disagreeing</i>	24	29%
<i>Challenging expectations</i>	3	4%
<i>Changed their mind</i>	7	9%
Contemplation	<u>59</u>	72%
Engagement	<u>33</u>	40%
Politeness	<u>3</u>	4%
Pragmatic use	<u>53</u>	65%
Total overarching functions attributed	<u>189</u>	

The overwhelming majority of these examples served a function of contemplation, followed by the pragmatic function as providing cohesion and topic-shifting. This is not unsurprising.

Some examples also featured variations of ‘yeah nah yeah’ or ‘yeah nah nah.’

There were four instances of ‘yeah nah yeah’ present, as well as three of ‘yeah yeah nah’ and two of ‘yeah nah nah’ in these MAONZE results. These variations will be discussed in Section 6.4 and each example will be listed in the Appendix.

6.3.3 ONZE Corpus

From the 26 examples after data tidying, the same functions were applied to these examples. The following table presents these results and the count of each function across this corpus.

Table 9: Total functions attributed to ‘yeah nah’ utterances from the ONZE corpus, based on ‘before match’ and/or ‘after match’ contexts.

Label given	Number attributed	Percentage of total examples (26) analysed (1dp)
Levels of agreement	<u>10</u>	38%
<i>Agreeing</i>	6	23%
<i>Disagreeing</i>	4	15%
<i>Challenging expectations</i>	1	4%
<i>Changed their mind</i>		
Contemplation	<u>9</u>	35%
Engagement	<u>6</u>	23%
Politeness	<u>2</u>	8%
Pragmatic use	<u>22</u>	85%
Total overarching functions attributed	49	

The overwhelming amount of examples in the ONZE corpus has a pragmatic use, followed distantly by levels of agreement. This was not exactly the same pattern that was demonstrated in the MAONZE corpus, where the majority of examples served a contemplation function followed closely by the pragmatic function.

8 of the 26 examples were just pragmatic, and had no other function attached to them. This is interesting given the rest of the examples featured at least 2 functions per example. On top of this, the MAONZE pragmatic examples were shared with either the engagement or contemplation function, or sometimes both. The pragmatic examples from MAONZE were never purely pragmatic.

A change over time analysis was not conducted for ONZE, mainly due to the fact that there were only 26 examples after data-tidying. Many examples did not feature a date of when they were recorded, and the date of birth for the majority of these speakers was around the 1970s and 1980s. This would likely show little variation in the ways ‘yeah nah’ was used if I conducted an apparent time study using the age or date of birth of the speakers.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 Frequency of functions

The task of matching functions with instances of ‘yeah nah’ whilst consulting their full transcripts was a difficult task, because, as we know, language cannot always easily be placed into neat, symmetrical categories.

As seen from Table 8, the most popular category for MAONZE was contemplation followed by pragmatic use, which were often used in tandem for many examples. In other words, many examples in the MAONZE corpus were used to give the speaker time to think and contemplate what was being said, whilst still providing a sense of cohesion or topic-shifting within their own speech. This is typical of discourse markers, and still adheres to Schouroup’s definition and common characteristics of discourse markers too (2011, p.2110).

‘Levels of agreement’ was used less frequently, but mostly used in order to provide a sense of agreeing or disagreeing with what was previously said. These two sub-categories were used at almost the same rate too. Similar to ‘no’ as a discourse marker, ‘yeah nah’ clearly has a sense of answerhood as well (Lee-Goldman, 2011), although it is not as popular as using it to the full extent of a discourse marker by marking contemplation and cohesion. Finally, the least popular function was politeness, which is surprising given how it was mentioned in the questionnaire that ‘yeah nah’ was showing an *“NZ desire to be polite all the time instead of honest”*. It is important however, that we understand that there is indeed a large level of overlap between disagreeing under the overarching term ‘levels of agreement’ and politeness. What is considered overtly versus implicitly polite will very much be up to the people in the conversations, and can often be carried using tone of voice or other language devices, like facial expression and eye contact which was not available at the time of analysis.

ONZE examples served the purpose of pragmatic use at an overwhelming majority, followed distantly by levels of agreement. Within this latter umbrella category, agreeing was used the most. Politeness was also the lowest function in the ONZE corpus, consistent with MAONZE findings and how politeness is harder to gauge from a transcript than whether the speaker agrees with the previous speaker, for example. Contemplation is the third highest function in the ONZE corpus, which is an interesting difference to the frequency of this category in the MAONZE corpus. Again, however, the categories themselves have overlap. For instance, whether somebody is contemplating what somebody else has said or their own answer can easily be tied to the pragmatic function by topic-focusing and topic-shifting. Similarly, contemplation and levels of agreement can easily be tied to each other in that one can be contemplating what somebody has said and still show their disagreement or reluctance to agree with somebody.

6.4.2 Corpora results compared to the survey results

This leads to how the functions themselves depict the participants' own views and attitudes of the discourse marker. We must not assume that these labels are 'correct' and reflect reality, as Boughton (2006) and Kuiper (2005) found in their folk linguistics studies. The fact that many of these examples featured multiple functions at once reflects how nuanced these examples are, and participants seemed to have clear definitions of the discourse marker in mind, when in fact real-life examples are messy and not as clear-cut.

Another aspect to show some caution over is therefore regarding the gender of who participants imagined for the typical user in the survey compared to the frequency of 'yeah nah' across males and females in the corpora. As a reminder, in the Quake Studies corpus, males had a normalised 'yeah nah' word frequency of 40.30 (2dp) per million words, and 52.39 (2dp) for women. For the MAONZE corpus, the word rate was 780.40 (2dp) per million words for males and 70.57 (2dp) for females. And finally for ONZE, the frequency was 74.25 (2dp) per million words for males and 54.79 (2dp) for females. This means that the QuakeBox and ONZE corpora had around the same word rate (between 40-75 per million words) for males as for females. However, MAONZE featured a much higher word rate for males than for females. This means that Māori men are more likely to use the term than if one is female or Pākehā (ONZE and QuakeBox didn't always explicitly collect ethnicity, however it is assumed to skew strongly Pākehā). This means that the survey respondents were incorrect in assuming a Pākehā male was more likely to use the term. Again, with the media and New Zealanders themselves suggesting that 'yeah nah' is strictly 'kiwi', the term is then inextricably linked to male-ness due to the lack of salient female 'kiwi' personas. This mismatch in ethnicity, however, could be attributed to the stronger ties to the typical 'kiwi' being Pākehā, as reported in Section 4.4.5. This is true when considering books like Phillips' *A Man's Country?* describing such typical 'kiwi' as "the pioneering type", and the site New Zealand A-Z explicitly states that "the stereotypical Kiwi male is assumed to be a heterosexual of Anglo-Celtic origin, although Māori men are often seen as embodying many of the characteristics described above" (2015). The latter is more consistent with the 50% of respondents who selected Māori as at least one of their responses to ImaginedEthnicity, as around 47% of participants selected only Pākehā and no additional category.

However, it is important to remember that there were low numbers of Māori and Pasifika participants and therefore there was a lack of varied speech attitudes and stereotypes in the survey. It therefore suggests that the survey expressed a more Pākehā stereotype and these participants were reflecting more on their own experience in their community with the marker. This high representation of the discourse marker in MAONZE is therefore surprising and suggests perhaps an ethnicity stereotype more solidly linked to who really uses the discourse marker.

6.4.3 Comparison of ‘yeah nah’ to ‘yeah no’ functions

I think the functions from the participants are a good basis for understanding the complexity of ‘yeah nah’. It is also worth comparing the above functions to those of ‘yeah no’ studies in order to understand how well the above functions reflect the reality of the discourse marker. As mentioned in Section 2.4, BurrIDGE and Florey’s functions (2002, p.148) included ‘propositional’ (similar to levels of agreement), ‘textual’ which could invoke cohesion and pragmatic equivalence, and finally ‘expressive’ which could invoke politeness and contemplation. BurrIDGE and Florey’s categories are reasonably restrictive and may not be able to capture the complexity of ‘yeah nah’ in multiple nuanced functions at once. They also didn’t reveal a gender difference in production of ‘yeah no’, which goes against the current study’s male stereotype. Moore (2007, p.44) broke down the frequency of BurrIDGE and Florey’s categories within their own work. As a reminder, the most popular category was 36.8% of tokens which served the purpose of ‘propositional and textual’, followed closely by ‘textual and expressive’ at 17.1%. These labels are consistent with findings that the pragmatic function in ‘yeah nah’ was also used reasonably high by both corpora, in keeping with the ‘textual’ function here. ‘Propositional’ (in its similarity to the levels of agreement function) was used reasonably high in both MAONZE and ONZE, and ‘expressive’ (in its similarity to the contemplation function) was also used highly in ONZE and higher still in MAONZE. This similarity in the most common functions across both ‘yeah no’ and ‘yeah nah’ suggests that perhaps the participants were reasonably accurate in the proposed meanings and contexts they came up with in the survey from Chapter 5.

Bower’s percentage of functions of ‘yeah no’ from Twitter shows a similar story (2018). The most common category at just over 30% was ‘emphasis of no’, followed by ‘shut down’ and ‘agreement’ (p.35). The latter two could be reflected in the levels of agreement functions in the current study, and thus are consistent with the frequency of this function in the results from MAONZE and ONZE.

6.4.4 Variations of ‘yeah nah’

Finally, it is worth looking into the variations of ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’ that were present in the corpora. In the tidied data of MAONZE, there were 8 examples where ‘yeah nah’ was used in tandem with additional ‘yeah’s or ‘nah’s in the utterance (see the Appendix for a full list of these examples). These examples very often featured engagement and levels of agreement. This meant that they carried a sense of acknowledging what was previously said but also either disagreeing or agreeing in their opinion. There was one instance of ‘yeah yeah nah’ in the ONZE data, whereby the primary function was levels of agreement (agreeing) and pragmatic. The addition of ‘yeah’ or ‘nah’ within this framework strengthened these levels of agreement in particular. The question to be asked here, is whether ‘yeah nah yeah’ is just a variation of ‘yeah nah’, for example. It is still relevant that the various media examples

feature just ‘yeah nah’, but the exception here is from Newshub (2018)²³ which explicitly talks about adding another ‘nah’ at the end of ‘yeah nah’. This indicates a desire to further explain oneself that seems to be insufficient in just ‘yeah nah’. Other work by Bower and Moore investigated some variation in ‘yeah no’, for example ‘no, yes’, ‘yes, no’, ‘nah yeah’ and ‘yep no’ (Bower, 2018, p.30&35; Moore, 2007, p.43), but no work seems to have concentrated on stacking the multiple constituents of ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’ together in this way. This would be an avenue of future work.

6.5 Conclusion of corpora analysis

Using QuakeBox, MAONZE and ONZE, we were able to see the distribution of functions of ‘yeah nah’ across these corpora. The functions were applied using the functions from Section 5.3 from Part 3 of the questionnaire. These functions included politeness, engagement, contemplation, levels of agreement (agreeing, disagreeing, changed their mind, challenging expectations) and pragmatic. QuakeBox only contained 2 examples of the discourse marker, MAONZE had 82 and ONZE had 26. This over-representation of examples in MAONZE suggests that usage is more linked to ethnicity than initially thought, providing more evidence to who exactly is using ‘yeah nah’. In reality, the typical user of ‘yeah nah’ is very likely to be a Māori male, going against the imagined user’s ethnicity in the survey. This mismatch in perception versus reality may be explained by how the typical ‘kiwi’ image is often portrayed in the media and public opinion as being Pākehā.

The MAONZE examples featured contemplation as the most common function, followed by pragmatic and ONZE featured pragmatic followed distantly by levels of agreement. The similar patterning of these functions’ frequency suggests that the questionnaire participants were reasonably accurate in determining the various functions of ‘yeah nah’. These functions were also reasonably consistent with frequency of functions across the ‘yeah no’ studies by Burrige and Florey (2002), Moore (2007) and Bower (2018), demonstrating some similarities across the two discourse markers.

Finally, it appears from MAONZE and ONZE that additional ‘yeah’s and ‘nah’s can be added around ‘yeah nah’. This often strengthened the meaning of ‘yeah nah’ to give it the levels of agreement function. This variation in ‘yeah nah’ also suggests that the structure of the discourse marker can be altered and repeated for additional effect, providing additional context to how the marker can be used.

²³ <https://youtu.be/6VZVyGtY8s0?t=105>

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion of Findings

7.1 Introduction

Using a Qualtrics survey from 122 predominantly New Zealand participants, respondents were asked to answer demographic questions about themselves and about an imagined, typical user of ‘yeah nah’. A corpora analysis was conducted as well to add some detail to the reality of ‘yeah nah’ usage.

The findings of this thesis will be formed based on the answers to the research questions:

1. Who uses ‘yeah nah’?
2. What kind of stereotypes surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’?
3. What context does ‘yeah nah’ appear in, and therefore, what does it mean?

First I will summarise who uses it, next I will outline the stereotypes around the marker, and finally I will describe the contexts that ‘yeah nah’ appears in.

7.2 Who uses ‘yeah nah’?

Using the data from three corpora, the person who is most likely to use ‘yeah nah’ was a Māori man. This is especially the case due to the over-representation of ‘yeah nah’ examples from the MAONZE (or Māori Origins of NZE) corpus, as well as the male word rate of ‘yeah nah’ in this corpus being 780.40 (2dp) per million words. This is in comparison to the word rates for females and males in the Quake Studies and ONZE corpora at around 40-75 per million words. Ethnicity is skewed more towards Pākehā in the latter two corpora, however ethnicity wasn’t always documented at the various times of recording.

Participants of the survey, however, were more adamant that the typical user of ‘yeah nah’ were likely to be Pākehā, although about half chose Māori as an ethnicity option in the ImaginedEthnicity question. This could be attributed to the low number of Māori participants in the survey, as well as how the idea of a typical ‘kiwi’ is very much skewed towards being Pākehā. This is especially true when looking at Phillips’ book *A Man's Country?* describing such typical ‘kiwi’ as “the pioneering type”, and the site New Zealand A-Z explicitly states that “the stereotypical Kiwi male is assumed to be a heterosexual of Anglo-Celtic origin, although Māori men are often seen as embodying many of the characteristics described above” (2015). Survey participants also responded around equally for how often they use the discourse marker across men and women.

Lastly, the participants who used ‘yeah nah’ themselves were most commonly aged 18-25, however they indicated the person most likely to use it was aged 26-35. This was attributed to participants indicating that they hear the marker less commonly amongst their peers and parents’ generation, and therefore found it suitable to attribute it to people slightly older than them. On top of this, many personas and public figures seen as stereotypical ‘kiwis’ are within this 26-35 age bracket.

These mismatches in who uses it versus who participants think uses it is not unusual in folk linguistic studies. This is evidenced by participants by and large incorrectly identifying information about speakers in studies by Boughton (2005) and Kuiper (2006).

7.3 What kind of stereotypes surround ‘yeah nah’?

According to the survey results, there are two main stereotypes that surround the usage of ‘yeah nah’. The first is a ‘kiwi’ stereotype, whereby participants strongly attached it to belonging just to NZE and not another variety of English, as well as explicitly commenting that ‘yeah nah’ is just part of the way we ‘kiwi’s speak. This is tied to the second stereotype that emerged from the survey results, that being the male-centric stereotype. This was expressed in the survey through over 90% of participants expressing that they imagined a male whilst completing the survey, as well as explicitly stating in an open question that ‘yeah nah’ is used by males for males. I concluded that these two stereotypes are actually intertwined. The thought process of most participants was that ‘yeah nah’ is strictly part of NZE, therefore when they completed the sections involving imagining the typical user of ‘yeah nah’, they thought of a typical ‘kiwi’ who would use it. The media and popular opinion often perpetuate this idea that a typical ‘kiwi’ is male; the origins and images associated with just the word ‘kiwi’ alone offers more male connotations. On top of this, the idea of the typical ‘kiwi’ appears to exclude any salient female personas. This is particularly true when looking at Jock Phillips’ book *A Man's Country?: the Image of the Pakeha Male* as well as New Zealand public figures and personas like How to Dad, Dan Carter, or Fred Dagg. Indeed, national stereotypes by default are often men, such as the typical Englishman, Italian or Frenchman. Finally, there is the people=male response bias, where when asked to imagine a person, participants will be more likely to imagine a male and thus makes the participant that much more likely to think a man will use the term more.

I introduced the idea of enregisterment, where performable signs become recognised and regrouped as belonging to distinct, valorised semiotic registers by a group of people (Agha 2007, p.81). I conclude that ‘yeah nah’ is enregistered in NZE as demonstrating common ground and ‘kiwi’ness amongst other New Zealanders. It is thus enregistered as being ‘kiwi’ to New Zealanders, indexing this strong gender stereotype. How it is enregistered is due to the media’s usage of ‘yeah nah’ and how certain ‘stereotypical kiwis’ (males) are linked to these similar ‘kiwi-isms’. Various products are also sold with ‘yeah nah’ printed on them.

Many items furthered this male stereotype, such as camping chairs, beer can coolers, and male clothing models wearing ‘yeah nah’ t-shirts.

7.4 What contexts does ‘yeah nah’ appear in?

Questionnaire participants were asked what they perceived the context and meaning of ‘yeah nah’ to be. Their comments were qualitatively analysed. Firstly, they suggested ‘yeah nah’ is most likely to appear in casual and humorous types of conversation. They determined the marker can carry a wide variety of meanings, conveying politeness, engagement, contemplation, as well as various levels of agreement. Male and kiwi-centric stereotypes were mentioned by participants, drawing on images of ‘the typical kiwi’ and furthering its ideological framework within the enregisterment process. How ‘yeah nah’ is said is also important; participants mentioned its intonation, pragmatic and unplanned usage providing salient context clues of its different meaning within a given conversation.

Based on these functions, a coding scheme was formed for the Quake Studies, MAONZE and ONZE corpora to show the reality of how the marker is used. More explicitly, these labels were politeness, engagement, contemplation, levels of agreement and pragmatic. The Quake Studies examples featured foremost a pragmatic and contemplation function, and additionally the levels of agreement function. This means that these examples were foremost used to provide cohesion and topic-focusing in an utterance, followed by used as a filler or to show contemplation, and then to show various levels of agreement or disagreement. MAONZE and ONZE demonstrated virtually the same story for their three most popular functions. This indicates that ‘yeah nah’ is similar to other discourse markers in that it can provide many meanings and functions at once. It is also similar to the functions featured in numerous ‘yeah no’ studies. However, this element of enregisterment was lacking in the ‘yeah no’ studies, demonstrating that its likely ‘yeah nah’ is indeed a different discourse marker entirely.

7.5 Wider implications

Firstly, this is the first study of its kind into ‘yeah nah’. This thesis helps us to further understand how gender and language stereotypes are perpetuated through the media and public opinion. With the lack of a salient female New Zealander persona or stereotype, people tend to associate ‘kiwi’ness with being a man. Even the word ‘kiwi’ has male connotations largely due to its origins in referring to male soldiers. This thesis also formed a working hypothesis that many national stereotypes, like that of England or Italy or Germany, for example, are male and therefore demonstrates a lack of female representation in the way that a country and its people are perceived. This helps us to understand how national stereotypes are formed and how gender is intertwined with national identity.

The discussion around enregisterment has wider implications for how linguistic items reflect the identity and culture of a group of people. ‘Yeah nah’ is used more by Māori men and yet

it is still seen as signalling localness and the ‘kiwi’ identity for many Pākehā New Zealanders. The products linked to ‘yeah nah’ also strengthens claims made by Johnstone (2009, p.169-170); the commodification of salient linguistic features within a language or dialect is evidence to the process of enregisterment.

Finally, this study has wider implications for how people perceive a discourse marker versus the reality of its usage. The mismatch of the Imagined Ethnicity in particular demonstrates how we should regard metalinguistic commentary with some caution, as stereotypes can be quite out of step with reality, again, as evidenced by folk linguistic studies by Boughton (2006) and Kuiper (2005).

7.6 Limitations

One limitation in the present study was in the availability of the audio to match the ‘yeah nah’ transcripts from the MAONZE and ONZE corpora. Not all examples had the corresponding audio available online. However, the transcription guide to MAONZE was invaluable in determining which examples to use according to how the examples were transcribed in the corpora. For example, the dashes between the ‘yeah’ and ‘nah’ suggested hesitation and it was very likely that ‘yeah nah’ wasn’t used as a complete phrase.

Another limitation was regarding the sample size for the survey; as discussed in Chapter 4, there were low numbers of Māori and Pasifika participants, despite my efforts to share the survey amongst various community groups. There were very high numbers of Pākehā responses, thus reflecting more Pākehā speech attitudes and stereotypes. Similarly, due to the survey being primarily distributed through university contacts, the participants themselves were very young too.

Finally, it might also be beneficial to change the wording of the questions in the questionnaire in future work. For example, Question 12 asking about participants’ own use of ‘kiwi slang’ seemed to confuse some participants who saw the examples of this slang as very different from ‘yeah nah’. The question itself used ‘choice’ and ‘chur’ as such examples that New Zealanders would associate with NZE, but in the future perhaps other examples would be beneficial in demonstrating this slang for participants. Further, the question design should also reflect how some participants didn’t have a solid stereotypical or imagined user in mind when answering the questionnaire; this could be solved by having more ‘other’ or ‘unsure’ responses available in some of the questions.

7.7 Future work

Firstly, one avenue of future work is to explore the link between gender and national stereotypes more. This would strengthen the claims that many national stereotypes are male, and thus when one is thinking of a particular country and the people likely to be associated

with it, are automatically thinking of male people. On top of this, asking New Zealand participants to name some male versus female 'kiwi' stereotypes would be interesting to verify that the male stereotypes are more salient than the female ones for the current study.

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12. I use kiwi slang and phrases such as “chur”, “choice”, “sweet as”, “mean as”, “no worries”:

rarely/sometimes/often/very often

13. I say “yeah nah”

rarely/sometimes/often/very often

14. Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of New Zealand English?

Yes/No

15. Do you think “yeah nah” is a feature of another type of English?

Yes/No

16. Do you know New Zealanders who say “yeah nah”?

Yes/No

Any additional comments: _____

Part 2: about yeah nah users

NOTE: Information collected on this form is kept confidential, not associated with your name.

When you imagine a typical person who might use ‘yeah nah’, what kind of person do you imagine?

From these demographic categories, **indicate the category of person you would most expect to use yeah nah:**

17. man/woman/nonbinary/takatāpui/other/

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

18. Their age (years): 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, 76-85, 86+

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

19. Apart from secondary school qualifications, would they have another completed qualification? Yes/No

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

20. If yes-> What would be their highest qualification?

NCEA Level 4 Certificate, NCEA Level 5 Certificate or Diploma, NCEA Level 6 Certificate or Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree or NCEA Level 7 qualification,

Bachelor Honours Degree or Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, Master's Degree, PhD, other qualification: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

21. Which ethnic group would they belong to? Please select all that apply:

NZ European/ Pākehā, Māori, Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan, Niuean, Chinese, Indian, Other ethnicity: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

22. Their city and/or country of birth: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

23. The country they have lived in for the majority of their life is: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

24. The country they live in now is: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

25. The area they currently live in is: rural/urban/suburban

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

26. English is their: First language/ Second language/ Third+ language/
Unsure

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

27. Please list any additional languages they might speak: ____

Indicate the category of person you would most expect to use 'yeah nah':

28. They would use kiwi slang and phrases such as “chur”, “choice”, “sweet as”,
“mean as”, “no worries”:
rarely/sometimes/often/very often

29. Any additional comments about this person who would typically use “yeah nah”:

Part 3: contexts that “yeah nah” would be used in

NOTE: Information collected on this form is kept confidential, not associated with your name.

Thinking of this person who is most likely to say “yeah nah”, how might they use it? What kind of conversation would this person be having? In what context would it appear? Can you give examples of it? Please give as much detail as you can. If you’re not sure, just say “I don’t know”.

[Textbox]

Appendix B

Information and consent form for Qualtrics questionnaire:

Information Sheet



Linguistics Department
 Telephone: +64 03 3695 545 (HoD phone number)
 Email: laura.manhire@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
 Date: 14/09/20
 HEC Ref: 002 AC 650.13

“Yeah nah, she’ll be right” – An Attitudinal Study of ‘yeah nah’ in New Zealand English Information Sheet

Thank you for taking part in this project conducted by Laura Manhire as part of a Masters thesis for the Linguistics Department at the University of Canterbury. This is under the supervision of Dr Lynn Clark who can be contacted at lynn.clark@canterbury.ac.nz. Both the primary researcher or supervisor will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project contributes to a better understanding of speech attitudes in a New Zealand context. There is a lack of research into the use of ‘yeah nah’ in New Zealand and this project aims to clarify some of the questions that surround it.

If you choose to take part in this study, your involvement in this project will be answering questions in three parts. The first part will be answering some questions about yourself, the second part will be about attitudes towards ‘yeah nah’, and the third part will be about likely contexts of ‘yeah nah’. The survey in its entirety will take no longer than 20 minutes.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, your name will not be recorded. The data may be made available online. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UCLibrary.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty by closing the browser. Any data submitted up till that point will not be saved until the entire survey is completed. However once your data is submitted, it will be impossible to withdraw your data because the data will not be stored with identifying information. The data retention period is 5 years for any raw data, as per the UC guidelines for Masters research. After 5 years, this raw data will be destroyed.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form.

Laura Manhire

Consent Form



Linguistics Department
 Telephone: +64 03 3695 545 (HOD phone number)
 Email: laura.manhire@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

“Yeah nah, she’ll be right” – An Attitudinal Study of ‘yeah nah’ in New Zealand English Consent Form

By clicking the box below, you are agreeing to the following:

- ☐ I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.
- ☐ I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time before completing the survey without penalty.
- ☐ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and supervisor and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- ☐ I understand that all data collected for the study may appear (in anonymous form) online.
- ☐ I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.
- ☐ I understand that my anonymous data may be used in potential future works and/or be made available to other researchers and students should it be useful in other contexts.
- ☐ I understand that I can contact the researcher Laura Manhire (laura.manhire@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) or supervisor Lynn Clark (lynn.clark@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

CLICK:

‘I agree’ to participate in this research project.

Laura Manhire

Appendix C

The following is the message that accompanied the Qualtrics survey link for distribution:

Kia ora! If you are familiar with New Zealand English and you're over 18 years old, it would be much appreciated if you filled out this survey! It's for my Masters Thesis in Linguistics at the University of Canterbury. It should take no longer than 20 minutes of your time. Click the link below and it will take you to the information and consent pages, followed by the survey. Thank you! -Laura Manhire

Appendix D

Table 10: Variations of 'yeah' and 'nah' from the 'yeah nah' results in MAONZE. Note: I have used bold on these variations for ease of analysis.

Number	Before Match	Text	After Match	Labels given
49		yeah nah	yeah	Engagement, levels of agreement (agreeing)
50		yeah nah	yeah been there a couple a times <yeah> that's alright	Engagement, levels of agreement (agreeing)
63	yeah	yeah nah	that's a good thing	Contemplation, pragmatic use, engagement
67	oh yeah	yeah nah	definitely . that's the specially in high school I've yeah I've	Engagement, levels of agreement (agreeing)
74		yeah nah	nah mate can't move too far from home mate . you	Engagement, levels of agreement (disagreeing), pragmatic use
83	um	yeah nah	nah but he's got heapsa ideas um hopefully next year	Contemplation, pragmatic use,
91	don't know how flash my dis oh	yeah nah	that's what I'll do just use the	Contemplation, engagement,

	my dissertation . yeah .		basis of it	level of agreement (agreeing, disagreeing),
100	yeah> if you actually go to class and study - so	yeah nah	yeah it could be hard for me nah gotta turn	Contemplation, levels of agreement (disagreeing)